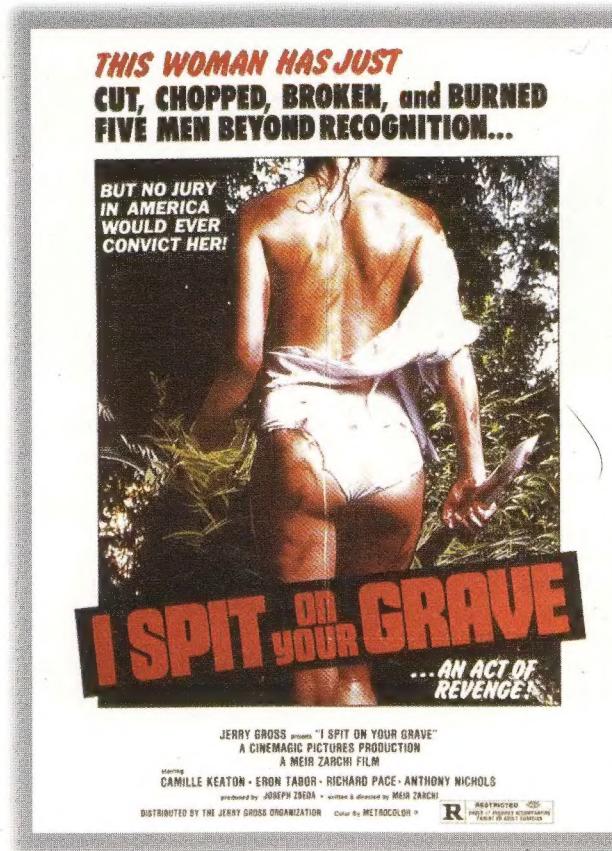


CHEAP CHILLS

Andy Brent checks out Prism's budget DVD releases of I Spit On Your Grave and Nightmares In A Damaged Brain...

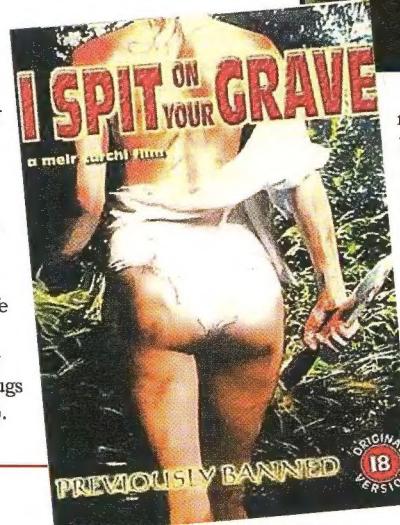


My how times have changed. At the height of Video Nasties fever, copies of movies like *Nightmares In A Damaged Brain* and *I Spit On Your Grave* were changing hands on the black market for a hundred quid each - and that was back in the days when you could kick off your mortgage with a similar payment!

But now comes news that Prism Leisure are bunging out the aforementioned diabolical duo as budget DVDs - a tenner will buy you three hours of brutal gang rape, eyewatering bathtime castration, severe axe-chopping during sex, and evisceration by outboard motor. It's a bloody sight more eventful than *Celebrity Wrestling*, that's for sure.

The better of the two movies is *I Spit On Your Grave*, originally made in 1978. This features one of the most graphic and vicious gang-rape scenes ever committed to celluloid, but it's presented in a cold, dispassionate manner with no background music to cue our emotions.

Camille Keaton (Buster's real-life grand-niece) plays a writer on holiday in a backwoods community who is raped twice by four local thugs (one of whom is mentally retarded). They leave her for dead, but she



recovers and wreaks a brutal revenge on her attackers, castrating one guy in the bath, chopping one up with an axe, and slicing another to pieces with an outboard motor.

Though technically very rough, the film is nevertheless very powerful in places, and as already mentioned, the lack of background music gives it a disquieting feeling of documentary reality.



NIGHTMARES IN A DAMAGED BRAIN

Writer/director Meir Zarchi reportedly based his story on a real-life incident where he discovered a girl who had been gang-raped in a city park and was disgusted to see that the police were more interested in what she was doing there alone than in giving her medical help. Of course the heroine of this picture doesn't even think of going to the cops! Keaton is shown as a strong-willed character who dishes out a cold and brutal revenge for the violation of her body. The gore scenes are low budget and rely on suggestion rather than bloody effects, though the bit where our heroine relieves the main baddie of his meat and two veg will bring tears to your eyes! The Prism disc has discreet cuts to the lengthy rape sequence as was demanded by the BBFC, but it remains the most complete version yet issued in the UK.

Nightmares In A Damaged Brain has also had a few discreet trims, though nothing that would take away the truly nasty flavour of the film as a whole. This is one of the most controversial of all video nasties, and in fact the original distributor of this movie (David Grant of World of 2000 Video) was actually put in prison for six months for releasing a video version that was sixty seconds longer than the BBFC-certified version! That may seem like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut, but it shows how serious the government were back then at cracking down on gory movies!

Shot in Florida in the late 70s and released in the States as plain old *Nightmare*, this is a lurid, extremely violent exploitation movie about a sexual psychopath under treatment for nightmares because, as a child, he axed his parents to death when he caught them having a bedroom bondage session. Crikey... that'll teach them to put a lock on the door!

Supposedly cured by drug therapy, our looney tunes hero is released. But after a visit to a New York sex shop (and a really sleazy scene where he drools at the mouth and has a fit in a peepshow booth) he sets off to terrorise single parent Sharon Smith and her three kids.

The effects (*Dawn Of The Dead*'s Tom Savini reportedly acted as special consultant) are grim indeed, with severed heads and axings galore. The oft-repeated nightmare scene is truly horrible. But what really leaves a nasty taste in the mouth is the film's misogynist tone and the way it links hardcore violence to explicit sex, another reason that it still merits its 'Nasty' description. And you honestly can't say that about many other films on that increasingly sad-looking list...

We have no doubt that both of these movies will be snapped up at Prism's bargain price. But just to give sales a boost wouldn't it be nice if they were to adopt World of Video 2000's ground-breaking original promotion for *Nightmares*. This involved the giving out of vomit bags and a "Guess The Weight Of The Brain" competition. Happy days, eh? •



**NIGHTMARE
in a DAMAGED BRAIN**

One moment of ultra violence that once seen is never forgotten

"Better than *Evil Dead* and *Driller Killer* from the people that brought you *I Spit On Your Grave*"

"The most repulsive, offensive, degrading, gory, depraved and horrifying movie ever made"

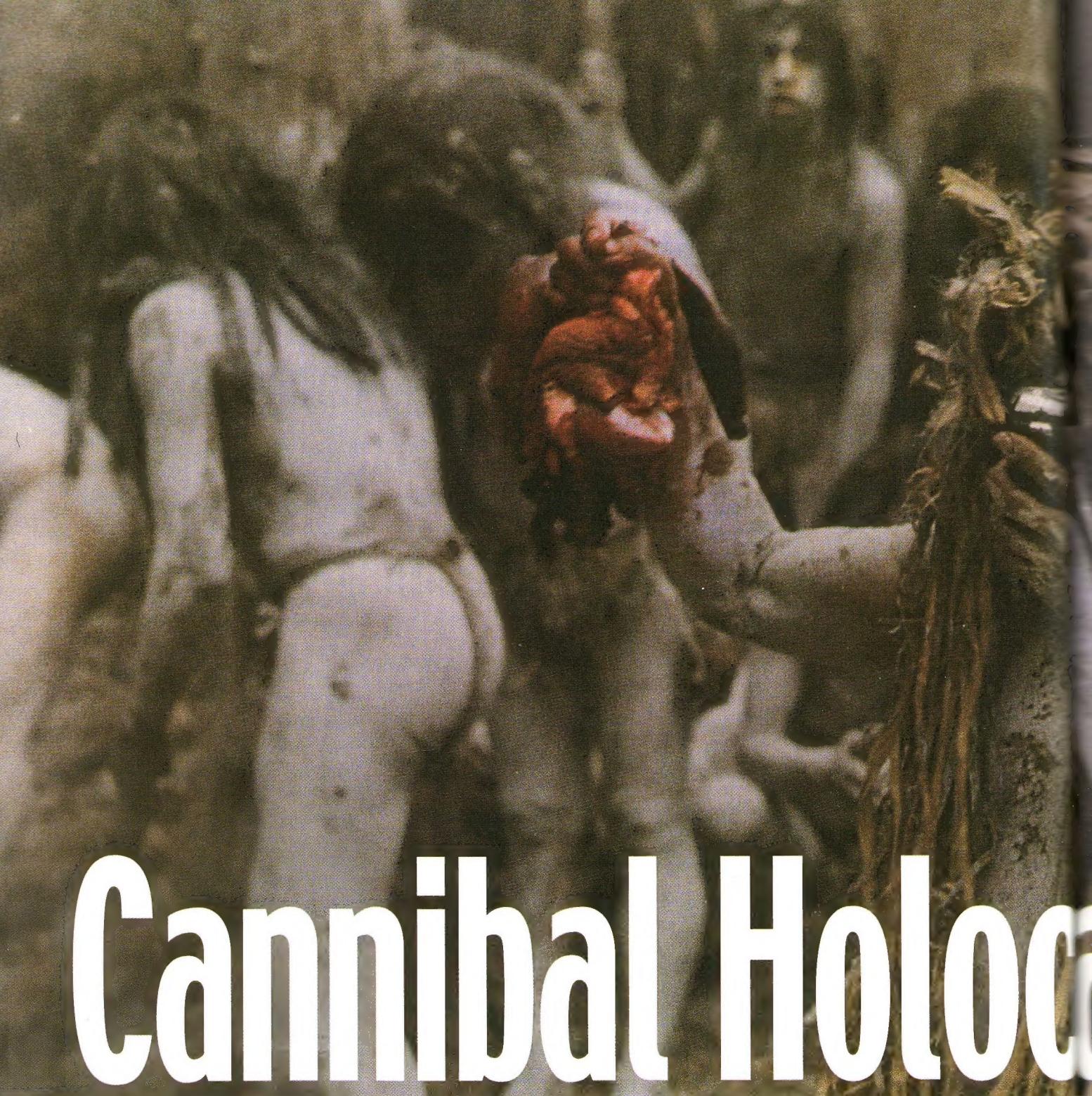
Bill Carlton –
Daily News

"Among the goosepimpler classic horrors like *Friday the 13th*, *Dawn of the Dead* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*"

Archer Winston –
New York Post

PREVIOUSLY BANNED!

18



Cannibal Holocaust

Surely the most reviled and controversial horror movie ever made, Ruggero Deodato's Cannibal Holocaust has recently been released as an Italian special edition DVD. We ordered in a takeaway and checked it out...

The DVD format is a supremely wonderful invention for the cult film enthusiast. Hundreds upon hundreds of films that we never would have expected to see receive the special edition treatment are being dealt with as if they were pure gold. We could start naming names, but the list goes on a mile long and we'd be here all night. Besides, we're fairly certain that you're right there with us, empty wallet and cult DVDs in hand.

It didn't start with DVD though, we still have our **Cult Epics** release of **Cannibal Holocaust** on laserdisc. The fact that **Cannibal Holocaust** has made multiple appearances on DVD already is also quite surprising, it's a strange and wonderful world we live in. We can now add to the list the recent

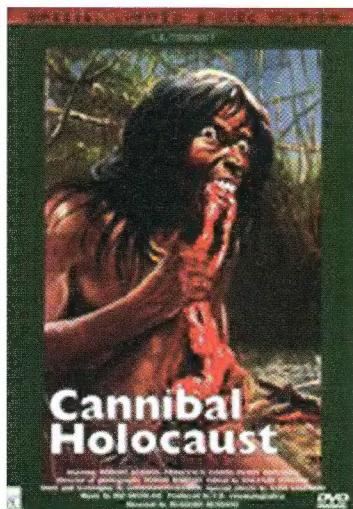
Italian PAL Region 2 release, which is both impressive, and a bit confusing at the same time. Let's dig deep into this new import DVD of one of the most infamous cannibal films ever made.

Four American documentary filmmakers (3 men, 1 woman) are missing and presumed dead after heading into the Amazon jungle. A rescue team led by Professor Monroe (Robert Kerman) heads deep into the jungle in an attempt to track down the missing filmmakers. Eventually they stumble upon a native tribe and make peace (by dangling their wangs) in just enough time to be given the missing canisters of film and they quickly head back to NY.

The remaining moments of **Cannibal Holocaust** are comprised

of a "screening" of the found footage (this is where many people make **The Blair Witch** correlations) for a bunch of braindead TV executives. The "found footage" consists of the four filmmakers taunting and abusing the local tribe members, real and extremely upsetting animal atrocities and the grand finale in which we see in gross and morbid detail exactly what had happened to the disrespectful filmmakers.

Notorious for its ultra realism and relentless scenes of carnage, **Cannibal Holocaust** has a sordid and fascinating history. Quite often banned (in many countries) and at times rarely available uncut on home video, the film even dragged director Deodato kicking and screaming to court at one point where he had to prove that the violence



'Overall this is an extremely high quality presentation with a lot of extras that we just simply didn't understand. Why oh why didn't we study Italian?'

discovered that there are really only a few seconds of footage missing. There's also an audio blip at the very moment the footage would have appeared. If it weren't for the audio blip, we may not have even noticed. It's minor, but worth noting for the purists.

At the point in the film where the few seconds are missing, there is a "jump" in picture and audio. It's slight, but it is indeed there. This is exactly at the point where the few seconds of footage would have been, instead there's an "odd" cut back to the folks watching the footage of the documentary. It's not a "smooth" edit, this is the so-called "blip" I was speaking of. It's not necessarily an "audible" blip, but it's a bit of an odd jump in picture and audio, evident that a few frames of film are indeed missing. Hopefully this clears things up.

Picture quality is certainly stunning to say the least, easily the best we've ever seen this film look. This high level of video quality is really important to how the film plays out. The footage from the

bummer here is the non-removable Italian subs over the English track. We've heard some claims that you can indeed remove the subs on some players, alas not ours.

Audio is offered in two Italian tracks (standard surround and Dolby Digital 5.1) and an English mono track. The English track is acceptable, but not outstanding. Distortion is minimal, except for some high-end noise, overall it gets the job done and is comparable to previous editions of the film. Don't forget about those pesky non-removable subs either.

There are plenty of extras here, so if you speak Italian you'll be happy as a clam. That's right, no English subs or tracks for most of this goodness. There are a couple of trailers and a radio spot (English) in addition to a 3-minute piece on the restoration of the film, with no dialogue, just music. There's also an hour long documentary only in Italian and an audio commentary featuring Deodato, Italian only as well. There are

BITES BACK!

who's taken with a spiked wooden dildo and that infamous image of the woman impaled by that darn stake.

OK, let's talk **The Last Road to Hell** sequence and what's apparently missing. There are indeed a few seconds of footage missing from this sequence on this DVD release. **The Last Road to Hell** is comprised of footage from a "previous documentary" from the filmmakers that are lost in the jungle. The footage is brief and consists of some mondo footage, people being executed etc. There is a brief shot (no pun intended) from a firing squad that's missing, really only a second or two of footage. Now, kicking and screaming, calling this a "cut" release is a bit premature and shows a fair amount of balls. We did a direct comparison of this sequence to our Laser Disc and

city and in the jungle that is NOT part of the actual "documentary" is of stunning quality. Sharp vibrant colours and no grain or print damage.

The documentary footage is slightly grainy, with some spots and blemishes (this footage was shot on 16mm). The contrast in quality really gives the "mondo" footage the upper edge and makes it seem all the more disturbing and realistic. This really shows how Deodato was just way ahead of his time, we enjoyed the film more this viewing than we ever have. Well, maybe enjoyed isn't quite the right word, but you know what we mean.

The shifts in quality between the mondo footage and the "film" itself really stand to enhance the experience of watching **Cannibal Holocaust**, especially when it's this noticeable. The

also a couple of extensive still galleries (press and behind the scenes) and bios, once again, only Italian.

Overall this is an extremely high quality presentation with a lot of extras that we just simply didn't understand. Why oh why didn't we study Italian? If you speak Italian, you'll be in heaven! If you're as ignorant and English speaking as us, then you'll have to weigh your options and decide. This is easily the most attractive presentation we've ever seen for **Cannibal Holocaust**, so how bad do you want it?

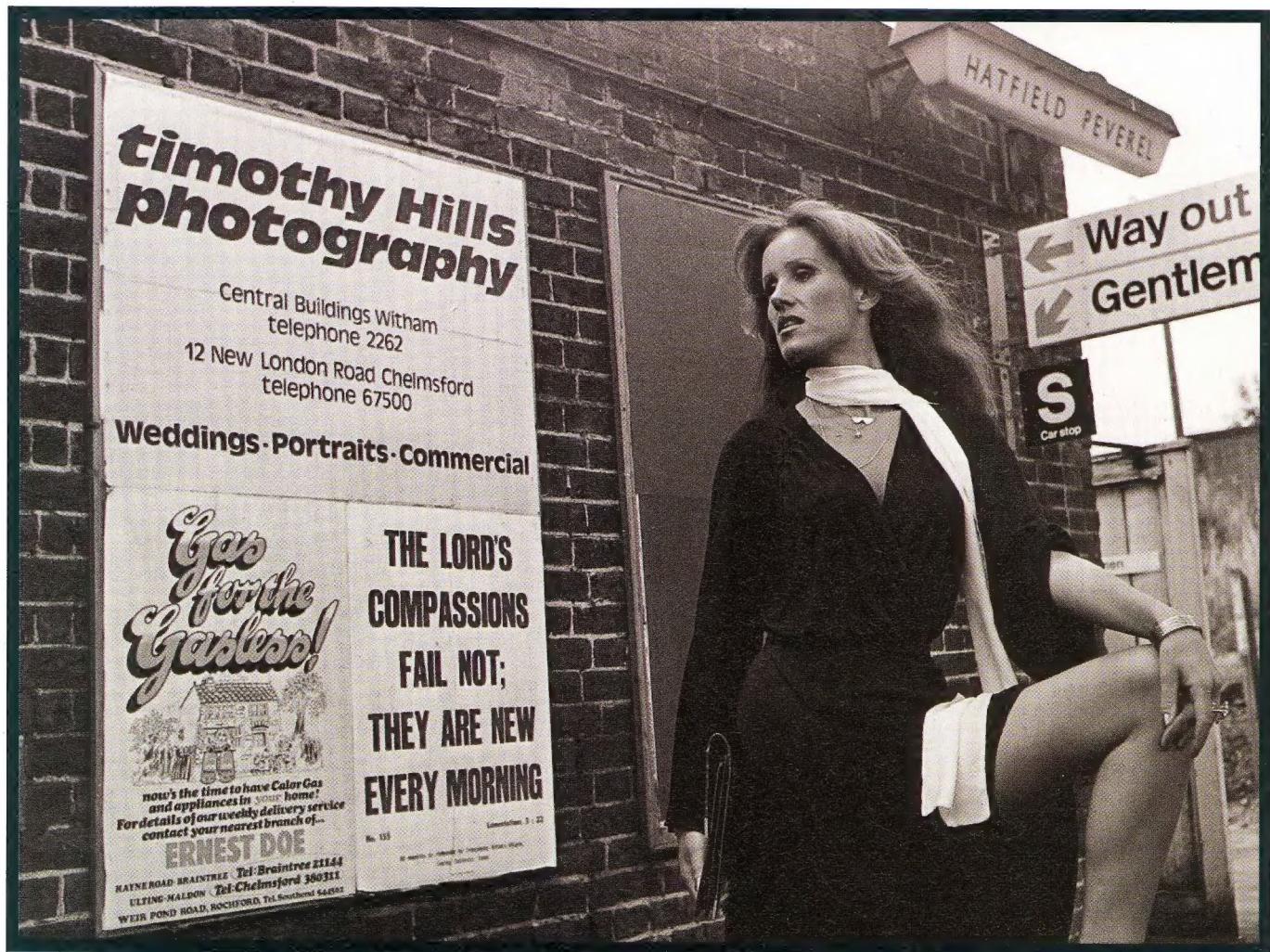
If you don't feel like waiting for an official US or UK DVD release and you can get past the Italian only extras and forced subtitles, then dig on into this PAL Region 2 DVD.

Head to xploitedcinema.com to order a copy! ●

aust

was indeed fake (except for the animal violence that is). Shocking because of its deadpan delivery, the many other cannibal clones available often came across as camp, with nutty dialogue and hammy performances. Not **Cannibal Holocaust** though, with its serious and grim tone, the film is anything but a laughing matter (unlike **Cannibal Ferox**) and remains just as ferocious today as it ever was.

I've already mentioned the animal violence, so keep in mind that you'll have to suffer through the likes of muskrat, monkey and turtle carnage before you even get to much of the human atrocity. The violence is still shocking, even by today's standard's and still looks a little too convincing for comfort including an adulterous woman



As the only British Video Nasty gets the Special Edition DVD treatment from Village Entertainment, Jonathan Sothcott looks back on its controversial rise to cult status and chats to director James Kenelm Clarke and star Linda Hayden...

Exposing Expose!

By the mid-seventies, the British horror film and, in fact, the British film industry itself, was changing. The huge commercial and cultural impact of films such as *Straw Dogs* (1971), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *Last Tango In Paris* (1972) and even *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* (1974) had made screen sex a rudimentary feature of mainstream cinema, and diminished much of the impact of the fleeting nudity which had proliferated horror films earlier in the decade. A new wave of British horror films, lead by the likes of *Vampyres* (1974) and *Satan's Slave* (1975), featured more graphic sex and nudity - and came into conflict with the British Board of Film Censors, which found itself increasingly under siege from morality pressure groups calling for much stricter censorship. Although few British films were deemed particularly controversial, one mixed the BBFC's twin hates of sex and violence so graphically that it was heavily cut and, during the video boom of the early eighties, banned outright. That film was *Expose*.

James Kenelm Clarke ("Kenelm is the Patron Saint of Gloucestershire. My full name is Thomas James Kenelm Clarke. I was born in Gloucestershire, Thomas was a dog my mother had and James was a name she liked.") was a highly respected documentary maker when he got his first taste of the burgeoning British exploitation film business. Having entered the television industry as a researcher at the independent company Anglia in 1960, he progressed to the BBC seven years later where he won great acclaim directing episodes of the investigative documentary series *Man Alive*. James explains how this led to his interest in directing softcore sex films:



"I did a 50 minute *Man Alive* called *Exploitation*. My reporter was John Pittman and it was a seminal *Man Alive*; it was quite interesting. So I wanted to do that because I wanted to know more about the sex film business because I wanted to explore what was going on. And the only way I could do that with any authority was to make a documentary about it. It featured a nice man called Pete Walker, who in many ways led the field – he always mortgaged his house, had an overdraft at Natwest. But he was adroit commercially in a way that I don't think I was."

The programme, which also featured David McGillivray (a regular screenwriter for directors Norman J Warren and Pete Walker and later a film critic and journalist), led Kenelm Clarke to consider dabbling in the market himself. A conversation with his friend Brian Smedley-Aston, a respected film editor who had recently turned independent producer with *Vampyres*, lead Kenelm Clarke to invite him to join the board of Norfolk International Films, the banner under which the pair would make *Expose*.

James Kenelm Clarke explains where the idea for the script came from: "The idea came from a location. I had a location and I had to fit a film around the location. I owned a house in Essex, which had belonged to my Godfather, which was called 'Gibb'. It was situated between Chelmsford and Malden in Essex. So I thought the best thing to do with this property was to use it as a film location."

Titled *The House On Straw Hill*, Kenelm Clarke's script mixed storylines, themes and imagery similar to *Straw Dogs* and *I Spit On Your Grave* (1978) into a cod-Hitchcockian thriller centred around his location and with just three major characters. The story tells of a writer, Paul Martin, whose first book, *Deadly Silence*, was an enormous success, but whose writer's block is preventing him from finishing his follow up volume. Plagued by a series of gory visions and irritated by his aloof but highly-sexed girlfriend Suzanne, he takes his agent's advice and employs a secretary. Suzanne leaves petulantly shortly before Linda – the secretary – arrives. When he picks Linda up at the station they are hassled by a pair of aggressive youths, who Paul deals with via some unlikely karate. Arriving back at Paul's house, he and Linda begin work on the book. But all is not quite right – Linda disappears upstairs to relieve her frustrations, but refuses Paul's advances, despite a palpable sexual chemistry. When Linda goes out into the fields for a walk, she is set upon by the two youths who had bothered her at the station. While one trains a shot gun on her, the other rapes her. The tables are turned though when Linda pretends to enjoy the assault and, catching the youths off guard, blows them away with their own gun.

Meanwhile, Paul searches through Linda's luggage and finds a copy of his book: her research into her new job seems a little intense. Upon her return, Linda



Right: Linda Hayden seduces Fiona Richmond... and Karl Howman cops a shotgun blast at close range - a fitting punishment for all those bloody annoying Flash adverts!



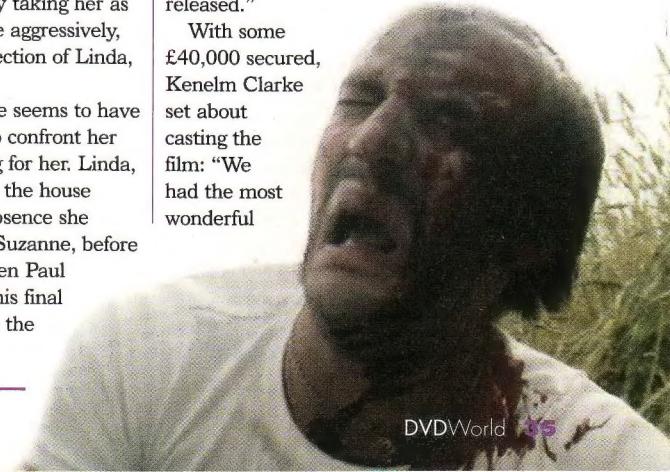
attempts to get rid of Paul's elderly housekeeper, Mrs Aston, and when she becomes obstinate, Linda brutally murders her. The next day, Linda's dismissal of Paul's advances to her prompts him to invite Suzanne back. Clearly surprised by this uninvited visitor, Linda takes a gamble and attempts to seduce her. As the two embrace in the kitchen, Paul walks in and tears Suzanne away, roughly taking her as his own. But, as they couple aggressively, he is startled to see the reflection of Linda, watching them in a mirror.

Paul chases Linda but she seems to have disappeared. Determined to confront her he drives off in a car looking for her. Linda, however, has been hiding in the house throughout, and in Paul's absence she completes her seduction of Suzanne, before brutally murdering her. When Paul returns, the stage is set for his final confrontation with Linda, in the vast wheat fields which

surround the house...

With a screenplay written, Kenelm Clarke and Smedley-Aston set about raising the capital they needed: "Once we had the script and location we set about raising the money. I had already written some music for Brian: he'd made a wonderful film called *Vampyres*, which is a seminal work. He had no money at all – in fact we were both from the same background; we wanted to make films, but we didn't want to do it in a conventional way. We'd remortgage our houses, anything, to make films. Brian had just made *Vampyres*, and I'd just made something for Granada, so we thought we'd get together and make a bit of money. So we get a little syndicate going; we had a Lloyds underwriter, and this was my idea, and we put units of £5,000 together so that you could be part of a £5,000 ingredient in this film. By doing that we got our £40,000 together. We knew we needed £80,000, but we had to get going. So we did it on various Lloyds members who had to put up £500 here, £1000 there etc and they didn't do too badly out of it, actually – they got all their money back plus quite a lot more. It had been pre-sold to Target International, so they all knew they were guaranteed a film that was going to be released."

With some £40,000 secured, Kenelm Clarke set about casting the film: "We had the most wonderful





Above: Udo Kier's sex scenes with Fiona Richmond weren't much find for either of them really... since Udo was gay in real life!

casting director on the film called Miriam Brickman, who is something of a legend. She had millions of ideas and eventually she thought Fiona Richmond was the person to go for. She'd heard Fiona Richmond on a sort of talk-in radio show and thought that she would be quite perfect for what we wanted. The thing was, Miriam had such pull and was so respected by actors that I could've asked for Laurence Olivier and he'd have come in and auditioned."

The role of Paul Martin was not an easy one to cast, and the decision to offer the part to *Mark of the Devil's* (1969) Udo Kier is one Kenelm Clarke has mixed feelings about: "He was gay. I mean, if you're making a film of any nature, people's actual real sexual orientation is irrelevant. It's how you react to how he looks in the film rather than how he was as a person. He has a slightly menacing, rather odd sort of nervous presence which I think I failed to exploit properly. He seemed very much oppressed and nervous, and if the film had been more adequately written, I feel more of his persecution mania would have come through. But that was a writing defect, not an acting defect. The proof of the pudding is in the eating and now he's very much in

demand because visually he looks very good and, as always in motion pictures, the visuals count much more than anything else." The role of Linda was offered to Linda Hayden who, since *Blood On Satan's Claw* (1970) had enjoyed success in further genre films - *Madhouse* (1973), *Vampira* (1974), drama - *Something To Hide* (1971) - and comedy - *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* (1974). In the early seventies, Hayden had often lost out on roles to Susan George owing to a certain physical resemblance between the two, and the similarities between *Expose*'s Linda Hindstatt and Amy, the character George played in her most celebrated film *Straw Dogs* (1971) were not lost on the actress.

James Kenelm Clarke is full of praise for his most accomplished star: "In a way this is a very slight film, but she actually carries it. She was absolutely marvellous. She was a terrific actress. In fact of the actresses from that time she is one of the most underrated."

Although Suzanne was the least prominent of the three main parts, the casting of Fiona Richmond in the role ultimately gave the film far wider notoriety than it would have had otherwise. The film had not been conceived for Richmond (indeed, Clarke notes that *Absolutely Fabulous* actress Joanna Lumley had been an early favourite), but her background made her an obvious choice. The daughter of a vicar, she had worked briefly as a bunny girl at The Playboy Club before winning a part as a nude swimmer in producer Paul Raymond's stage play *Pajama Tops* in 1971. Before long, Fiona had landed the lead role and went on to star in *Let's Get Laid*, Raymond's first play at the infamous Windmill Theatre in Soho. When Paul Raymond diversified into softcore pornography, Richmond became a columnist in his publication *Men Only*, causing an uproar with her series of articles

chronicling her (entirely fictitious) exotic sexual exploits. Notes Kenelm Clarke, "She was very much under the control of Paul Raymond. Paul Raymond invested £5,000. She was very much under his thumb and he was very keen that she was going to be in it. He was ambitious for her. I'm sure Fiona will respect this point, which is she's not the greatest actress in the world but she gave the film a certain casting notoriety and from a commercial point of view that's what we wanted."

For the roles of the two youths, Kenelm Clarke cast two young actors who, today, are far better known for work far removed from horror films. Karl Howman starred in the popular 80s BBC comedy series *Brush Strokes* and has more recently fronted a long-running and popular campaign for *Flash bleach* (he has also starred opposite Linda Hayden in a number of stage farces). Vic Armstrong, meanwhile, is one of the world's leading stunt co-ordinators and second unit directors, with credits including the James Bond and Indiana Jones series.

The two and a half week shoot was largely unproblematic and wrapped on time and budget. For James Kenelm Clarke, the experience remains one that he continues to cherish:

"I can honestly say it was the happiest film crew I've ever worked with. When it was over they gave me a cigarette lighter with an inscription, and we had an absolutely ridiculous end of shooting party at a little local hotel. There was a swimming pool at the hotel, you must remember this was a very hot August, and after a lot of hijinks, they ended up throwing me in the pool."

With the film in the can, Brian Smedley-Aston and Jim Connock set about the editing process. James Kenelm Clarke is quick to point out that only modesty prevented Smedley-Aston from receiving billing for his post-production contribution:

"The late Jim Connock is credited as film editor: in fact, it was edited by Brian, who is probably one of the most brilliant film editors there has ever been. But Brian was the producer and didn't want an editing credit. But he knows his craft so well - all those montages of creaking doors were all done by Brian. In fact, to be honest the film only works - if you think it does work - because of Brian Smedley-Aston's film editing. He was so good at it."

Unfortunately, when the rough cut was assembled in September 1975, it became apparent to Kenelm Clarke and Smedley-Aston that something was alarmingly wrong. Laments Kenelm Clarke: "To be honest, by the time I'd finished shooting the film the rough cut was far too short. So I had to go back and write new scenes to draw it out a bit. Because the requirements of the distributor, Target International, was that it would be 80 minutes or more. And my rough cut came to 72 minutes. The extra scenes included a conversation between Udo Kier and Linda Hayden in his Rolls Royce where he runs down how he likes to work. It was far too short - the rough cut should have been around a

hundred minutes."

Despite the controversial nature of several key scenes, James Kenelm Clarke had not submitted his script to the BBFC for their comments prior to production ("We just went straight ahead and just did it!" he notes) and the completed film ran into trouble as soon as it was submitted to the board for classification.

"The thing about James Ferman is that he was very underrated – he was immensely fair. We always saw him as a philistine who was simply going to screw up our movie. Looking back, and in view of the current climate, you had a very, very intelligent man, and who was sufficiently gifted in his arguments to be able to tell you why he was doing various things.

"Ferman requested major cuts in three areas. The first, is the scene where Karl Howman and Vic Armstrong rape Linda in the field. Well, it's sort of a rape, but the subtext really is that the character Linda is encouraging them to go ahead because she's going to kill them. James Ferman wanted a lot of cuts. The second scene was where the house-keeper, Mrs Ashton, arrives and is assassinated. There's a lot of knife-work, there's a lot of blood. And again, we really had to cut that down. The third was the scene in which Fiona Richmond gets cut up in the shower. That again was much cut."

In a statement, the British Board of Film Censors noted that the problem was the linking of sex and violence "which has always troubled the board and we required several cuts to eliminate the more graphic juxtapositioning of the two."

Once the cuts were made, the film underwent a further change, much to the chagrin of James Kenelm Clarke: "Neil Agran, who was the head of Target International, changed the title to *Expose*. He was actually an intelligent man and he just felt *The House On Straw Hill* was too convoluted. I think he was wrong, actually. I think *The House On Straw Hill* was more intriguing. I think *Expose* was a little bit too snappy and didn't make the mind wonder what it was about. It was too neat and it didn't solve any problems."

The film's Trade Show took place at the Wardour Street Preview Theatre on March 2nd 1976. In attendance was Linda Hayden, who was shocked by the way the emphasis of the film had shifted from suspense to sex since she read the script. Unhappy about both the new tone of the film and not being warned about changes being made, the actress refused to publicise the film and rarely discusses it, even today. "I wish I hadn't made *Expose*," she sighs, "I don't know why I got lulled into making that. I had no idea they were going to change certain things they did afterwards. It's the only thing I've ever refused to do any publicity for. I was just deeply upset that I even did it. It was a big mistake." Hayden, justifiably upset that the edgy thriller she's signed up for had been presented as a chintzy Fiona Richmond vehicle, practically disowned the film, and rarely discusses it today.



Despite the misgivings of one of its stars, *Expose* opened at 6 in Screen International's London Top Ten, taking £6,301 in its first week. Marketed with the suggestive byline 'Nothing, but nothing is left to the imagination' the film's notorious star and much-publicised BBFC cuts made for good word of mouth and it eventually made over £25,000 on its London run.

The film was released uncut in America as *Trauma* to little fanfare, and this print resurfaced in 1983 when the film was released on video in the UK under its original title by Intervision. The following year, the film was banned under the terms of the Video Recording Act, thereby earning the questionable distinction of being the only British film on the infamous 'Nasties' list. It remained unavailable in any form in Britain until the mid nineties when the cut version was released on video and broadcast on cable television.

Looking back at *Expose*, undoubtedly his most famous film, Kenelm Clarke is disarmingly honest in his appraisal: "It's not a good film and there's no point in pretending it is. It has a certain amount of bravura and one or two unexpected moves and I'll put forward a good case for the music. The composer was a man named Steve Gray, who I think is a very underrated composer. He was very nervous about doing it. He had virtually no money and no musicians and it's an early use, actually, of synthesisers.

"It just wasn't a very good script. It needed to be pulled together. It needed another three or four months' work. But we were so keen to make the film that we shot the first draft! And therein lies the weakness of the film. I personally made no money out of it at all – I had no fee for either writing or directing or anything. Because I simply wanted to make films. And I was young, and I was keen and money didn't really matter. Making films

Above: Udo Kier takes on the demented Linda Hayden in the movie's blood climax...

mattered more than anything else."

Kenelm Clarke's passion for film-making is evident throughout *Expose* and although the film is a little rough around the edges it has a genuinely sleazy, European quality which distinguishes it as far more adult than the similarly violent British films produced by the likes of Pete Walker and Norman J Warren during the same period.

Perhaps the film's greatest strength is in its triumvirate of cult icons in leading roles. Udo Kier gives a fairly dreadful performance, but his striking appearance and disconcerting screen presence more than compensate for his lack of thespian skills. Similarly, Fiona Richmond's performance is far from great, but her outlandish, exotic beauty and enthusiastic participation in the bedroom scenes makes this largely irrelevant. As James Kenelm Clarke noted, it is left to Linda Hayden to carry the film in terms of performance, and despite her qualms about the finished product, she delivers a highly credible portrayal of a woman out for revenge and dangerously on the edge reason. Indeed, there are few more striking images in British horror films than Linda Hayden, armed with a shotgun, wearing a summer dress in a field of wheat.

Much of *Expose*'s reputation is based on rumour and scuttlebutt – for over twenty years, writers have speculated of a much longer version of the film than has ever been released (a suggestion dismissed as "laughable" by Kenelm Clarke), and the film's place on the Video Nasties list served only to enhance this status. Today, *Expose* has become a genuine cult movie – Village Entertainment are releasing a Special Edition DVD, there is a remake (as *House On Straw Hill* in the works, and even talk of a *Boogie Nights* style film about the making of the original. Not at all bad for a film made simply because the director had inherited a house... •

THE REAL FACE OF DEATH!

Calum Waddell Interviews Faces of Death director John Alan Schwartz!

It was the horror film equivalent of who shot John F. Kennedy. For almost twenty-five years genre critics and fans have asked, "who is responsible for **Faces of Death**?" Well, wonder no more. Although the Internet Movie Database has listed the mysterious Conan Li Cilaire as John Alan Schwartz, that's just the beginning of the story. In actual fact, "Conan Li Cilaire" is two people – the first three **Faces of Death** films were produced and directed by Mr Schwartz along with someone else whom (sorry readers) I've been sworn to secrecy never to utter the name of. Indeed, this interview only took place after I promised that the "significant other" behind **Faces of Death** never be mentioned.

Never mind, however, because John Alan Schwartz remains probably the most significant part of the **Faces of Death** legacy. He wrote the first three films, and turned full creative control of the series over to his brother when it became time to make the fourth film (the Internet Movie Database incorrectly lists him as the director of Part 4). To my surprise, he has also lectured about film in the States, and used scenes from **Faces of Death** as a sample of his work. This is a man who remains proud of his work in the exploitation genre and considering that he caused a global moral panic that centred around a movie of (let's face it) patently faked death sequences, it's not hard to understand his pride.

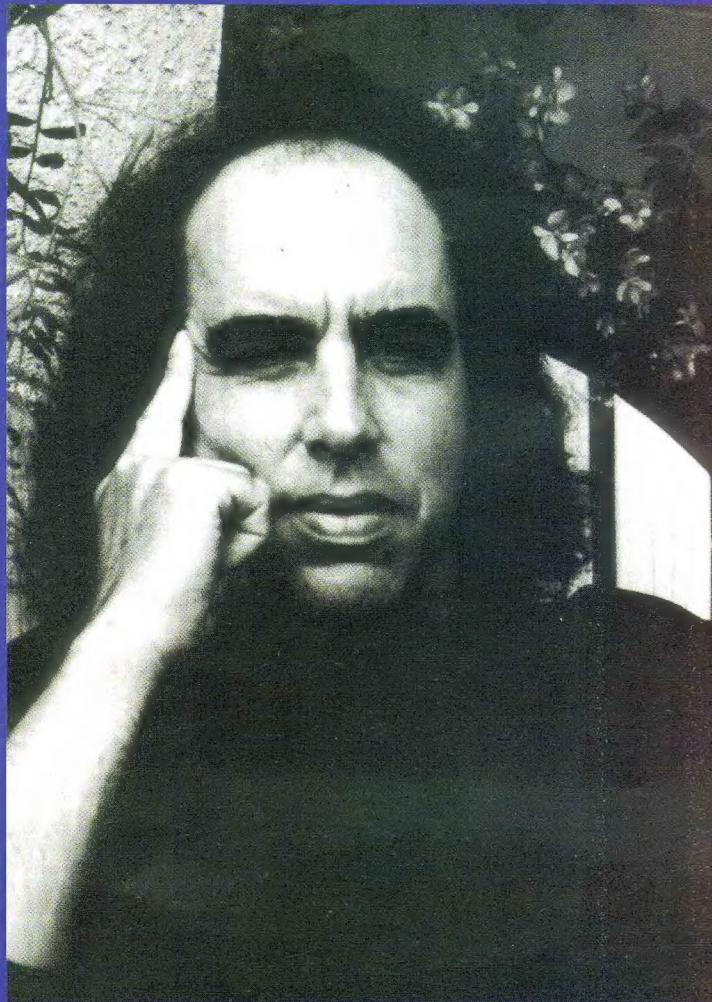
As you might imagine, tracking down Schwartz was difficult. I got a tip-off from a friend of mine, Jim Flocker at Program

Power Entertainment, that he knew the people who made **Faces of Death**. Naturally, I didn't believe him. This was back in November, and my disbelief was put to shame when Jim obtained some phone numbers for me to call. Several months later, and after a few apologetic conversations with a number of people (I spoke with one fellow who denied knowing anything about it, and another chap who did the music for **Faces of Death 4**) and finally I got a friendly e-mail from Schwartz himself.

A very interesting person to speak to, Schwartz is also firmly established as a writer in documentary, television and film with credits that include **Dragnet**, **The Fall Guy**, **Knight Rider** and **Street Hawk**. Of course, **DVD World** was most interested in hearing about making the movies that have the dubious "honour" of re-launching the mondo film genre. Produced by the Japanese Shoshiku firm, **Faces of Death** is currently undergoing something of a renaissance in Great Britain where, after two decades of being banned, they are being released – with only the most minor of cuts – by the increasingly prestigious Hard Gore label.

Surprised by the film's controversial reputation in the UK, Schwartz is happy to offer his services as a lecturer on these films should anyone be interested in having him over. In the meantime, enjoy this exclusive on the man who launched so many disgusted tabloid headlines...

DVD World: So tell me a little bit about how **Faces of Death** came to production in the first place...



John Alan Schwartz: Years ago I was working for a production company, and we created it. We were the first people to do this sort of thing. I'll tell you a story. At the time I was dating this girl whose father was an anaesthesiologist, and I took her to the premiere and it shocked her. We screened it at this little theatre at Fox, and after the film finished

there was not a sound from the audience, people were so stunned. This doctor came up to me and said, "That is the most comprehensive study of death I have ever seen," and that was an honour for me, to be told that by a doctor. They made four of these films and a "worst of" – my brother wrote and starred in the last one.

DVD World: What was your background in film before making **Faces of Death**?

JAS: My background was in documentaries. I started off as a runner, then became an editor, then an assistant director and then a director. I worked my way up from nothing. My most recent production is called **The Pool**, an erotic thriller, and I'm also doing a twisted black comedy about a unique family called **Living the Dream**.

We went out and built an electric chair. Then we got an actor to play the guy on Death Row. We put some Crest toothpaste in his mouth and then we counted down some numbers and at number one he started to convulse and spit out the toothpaste so it looked like he was foaming at the mouth...



THE SEQUEL TO THE GUT WRENCHING ORIGINAL...

FACES OF DEATH 2



WARNING: If the brutal and explicit depiction of death is upsetting to you, please do not view this film



DVD World: What exactly was your role on *Faces of Death*?

JAS: I was the co-director and co-producer and the sole writer, under a pseudonym. I used the name Alan Black, because Alan is my middle name and Schwartz is German for Black. Most of us used pseudonyms because we were afraid of it! I remember my partner getting a call from *Entertainment Tonight*, and they wanted to do an interview with us. This was after they had done a show against violent films, singling out *Faces of Death*. I thought, "I'll never work in Hollywood again!" Dan Rather was on Prime Time News telling people that we made this horrible snuff film, and of course *Faces of Death* is not a snuff film at all. We just fooled everybody!

When that all happened, we were very scared of being found out. But now I find that it is a tremendous calling card to say that I was the co-creator of *Faces of Death*. It's one of the most famous cult classics, and it was voted as one of the top fifty cult films in America. It took in sixty million dollars, and that was on a budget of only \$450 thousand. There was a multitude of reasons that we went under pseudonyms. It was such a controversial film and we never thought it

was going to be released in America. When it came out in the States I nearly had a heart attack! But that film opened a lot of doors.

DVD World: How did you personally become involved in *Faces of Death*?

JAS: At the time I was working for a company that made family films and some Japanese people came to us and said, "We want to make a film about death." It was revolutionary for its time, and we did tons of research. I'll tell you one interesting anecdote. I was reading this piece about the death penalty in Hustler magazine, which exposed the electric chair. So I said, "Let's go and build an electric chair." Then we got an actor to play the guy on death row. We put some Crest toothpaste in his mouth and then we counted down some numbers and at number one he started to convulse and spit out the toothpaste so it looked like he was foaming at the mouth.

The famous monkey brains scene as well - that restaurant was down on Long Beach (California). They brought the monkey in and he freaked out a little bit because they put him in that enclosure and then they hit him with rubber mallets - the monkey was going crazy! We had these special effects guys - you know, our

GUT WRENCHING... BANNED IN 46 COUNTRIES

FACES OF DEATH 3



WARNING: If the brutal and explicit depiction of death is upsetting to you, please do not view this film



JAS: Oh yeah, she loves *Faces of Death*, and Fiona Apple, the pop singer, told me she saw them when she was ten years old and it turned her into a vegetarian.

DVD World: You mentioned earlier that you were approached by Japanese people to make the film. It has been rumoured for years that *Faces of Death* was a Japanese production...

JAS: Yes, these Japanese people came to the company I was working at, and the Japanese are fascinated with death, and they asked if we could create a movie about death. So we got some real life footage and recreated a lot of stuff ourselves, and we got this guy to play Frances B. Gross... Frances B. Gross was an actor and a cameraman named Michael Carr. I believe that he recently died. Gene Kauer, who did the music, also died several years back. During the making of the movie we had all sorts of bizarre incidents. We were shooting down on a beach and we heard this screaming. This was at Sea Beach, and we found out that a body had been washed up on the shore. So of course we filmed it. That became the guy who died in a surfing accident. I went to see a medium, to read my future, and she went

DVD World: What is the name of the special effects company that worked on the film?

JAS: It's called the Makeup Effects Lab. Another interesting story. Do you know Jeffrey Dahmer? He wanted to meet me. But there was no way I was going to prison to meet him for lunch. If I was late I'd probably have been served a cold shoulder (laughs). Sorry, bad joke there - but I know lots of celebrities who are fans of *Faces of Death*. Like Belinda Carlisle, and I remember when John Stewart met me he actually bowed down to me - probably in disgust!

DVD World: I'm very surprised to hear that Belinda Carlisle (recently seen in *Hell's Kitchen*) is a fan!



into a trance! She said to me, "There's blood and death all round you." She thought I was a serial killer! I told her that there was blood and death all around me because I just spent the last week filming in a morgue and a slaughterhouse.

DVD World: Was it unpleasant to be filming in such places?

JAS: You know, we are considered to be the godfathers of the reality television trend. We were able to gain access to the LA County Morgue, to slaughterhouses, to a penitentiary where they still had a gas chamber. They gave us full access because they thought that we were just these local students making crazy student movies. We really exposed what happens inside a slaughterhouse. That was incredible, we got to shoot cattle, lambs and chickens. We never got to shoot pigs. The foster farms said "no." But shooting in a slaughterhouse is just (pauses) - it's just intense. We were really exposing animal abuse long before anyone else had.

We got into a vivisection lab, the Tiger Clinic, and these people were (makes with disgust) cutting open dogs and leaving them there to die. We're recognised by various animal abuse groups. Our interest was to explore the

world of death, every possible scenario, and to give people a perspective on death. I intend to understand my own death, and when somebody dies and I seriously believe this - their spirit leaves them. All that's left is this hunk of flesh - and I do think that there is a life force that leaves your body.

DVD World: Where did you get the name Conan Le Cilair from?

JAS: That's just another name. You know Conan, the character that Arnold Schwarzenegger plays? It's a fictitious name but we always felt that someone should use it in a movie.

DVD World: Are you surprised that *Faces of Death* caused so much controversy?

JAS: Not at all. Nobody had done a comprehensive study on death before. HBO and programs like *Real Sex*, these sort of exposés that are going on today, and the "crazy specials" on Fox, like *When Animals go Wild*, these are all just like various segments from *Faces of Death* made into specials.

DVD World: Were you morally against any of the sequences you put in the film?

JAS: Did you feel any of them went too far?

JAS: I have to tell you, I was in a morgue for ten days. I saw dead babies and all sorts of unnatural deaths. People who died because of suicide, bullet wounds, traffic accidents... What we made is the darkest film in cinema history. Now in that sort of situation where you have such intense reality, people joke with each other to keep their sanity.

DVD World: Were you aware of the mondo documentaries that came before *Faces of Death*, such as the *Mondo Cane* series?

JAS: *Mondo Cane* I was aware of, but the idea of having a doctor present *Faces of Death* came from *The Hellstrom Chronicles*, where bugs are taking over the earth. It's a pseudo-documentary and it scared the hell out of me when I first saw it. The idea to actually chronicle death came from that, with the philosophical feeling.

DVD World: The sequence in the monkey restaurant caused people a lot of stress.

JAS: It's so unbelievably real. We had a

sound problem when we were doing that scene and we ended up having to loop the people who were sitting at the table. The way it turned out we were quite upset because you could see the nail in the monkey's head, but no one seemed to notice that. I would just sit there with my partner and we'd think of these bizarre things. I saw this footage of a girl jumping off a building, so we filmed an insert up of a girl on the ground with her brains all over the ground. We were also among the first people to transfer video to film. We would build upon using the same source, and it worked so well.

DVD World: So you don't think the monkey ever felt threatened during the filming of the 'monkey brains' segment?

JAS: No, the trainer was the guy holding the animal in the restaurant. The monkey was never hurt. He might have freaked out a little when he got put in a confined space, but the mallets were made of rubber. The rest is just special effects.

DVD World: Whose idea was the song at the end, and the woman giving birth?

JAS: Gene Kauer wrote that song, and my brother Jim Schwartz, wrote the song



for **Faces of Death 4**. Gene also came up with the "one, two - ah one, two, three" part for when the girl leaped off the building. He was a crazy, twisted, amazing musician (laughs). At the end of the film, I wanted to close things on an upbeat note. Show some hope, and that's why I wanted to show someone giving birth. To show that for every death there is a new life being born.

DVD World: Were you involved in the documentary that accompanied the DVD release of **Faces of Death**? It's called **Faces of Death: Fact of Fiction...**

JAS: No I was not. That was done after the fact. We did that documentary for the distributor, and my brother hosted and wrote it. The person who appeared on the DVD as Conan Le Cilare, wearing dark glasses and filmed in darkness was my brother as well. I didn't appear in the documentary because there wasn't enough money in it (laughs).

DVD World: It's rumoured that **Faces of Death** took in more money than **Star Wars** in Japan.

JAS: I don't know if that is true, I only know that it was a huge success over there. Was it a big hit in Britain?

DVD World: Do you have any idea of the stink you guys caused over here? (I go on to explain the 'video nasties' phenomenon that the film helped to create).

JAS: When we did **Faces of Death 2** and **3**, we bought footage from Europe, including England. I bet no one knew that! You can't get into any legal trouble for talking to me can you?

DVD World: No, in fact **Faces of Death** was released in the UK again last year, after nearly two decades, and I think they only cut a little bit from the monkey brains segment because the British censors said that the monkey looked frightened.

JAS: Well I can go on record here and say that this is just not true. We would never have harmed the animal, and the trainer was there the whole time, he oversaw everything. There was no need to cut anything from that scene.

DVD World: I've got a quote here from a member of the British government who was shown segments from **Faces of Death** back in the early eighties, before it was banned. It was a conservative MP called David Mellor, and he said to the press: "I found it particularly offensive and revolting, as did everyone else who saw it." Would you like to give an overdue answer?

JAS: I would say that I find that patently ignorant. Everyone is going to die at some point, and if you don't look at death then how on earth can you appreciate life? Death is inevitable for everyone, something that we are all going to experience, and the big question is what happens then? It's just as important a question as, "Are we the only living beings in the galaxy?" Death is something that affects us every day. You see the amount of animals that are killed so that we can eat meat, and the earth suffers every day because of our greed. I would say that conservatives, in America and in other countries, are all the same. They're always the ones looking to censor something. Right now in America we are trying to hold on to our first amendment rights. We must maintain a free society where people are able to express themselves. It's not my responsibility to see that your eight-year old child doesn't see the film. That should be up to the parent.

DVD World: In amongst all the horror sequences you filmed, do you have funny memories of making the first film?

JAS: Oh we were all trying to find humour. We had to find humour in all of this insanity. Insanity was exploding everywhere! After we filmed in the slaughterhouse, for example, we went

and had steak for lunch. I'm a vegetarian now, I have been for years, but back then it was like trying to forget what you had just seen. It was crazy - we were all teetering on the verge of insanity!

When we were filming in the morgue, the attendants were always laughing and that was because we had seen so many horrific things. That was the only way to deal with it. They became numb to it after a while. I remember one day we went into the morgue and we watched seven autopsies being performed at the same time. One of us said that it smelt like a bad deli. It was a crazy joke, but that was how we managed to deal with things. Otherwise we would have gone insane through making this dark and gloomy film.

DVD World: Well there seems to be some very dark humour in the movie...

JAS: I'm glad you noticed that Calum, because it was always my intention to infuse the film with humour. Of course, a lot of it was on purpose. The bit where Francis B. Gross says, "It will be a long time before I eat another piece of steak" after the slaughterhouse segment. We did that throughout the movie, adding humorous lines. That poem he reads in the morgue, I made that up as I watched the footage in post production.

DVD World: And you were personally approached to be involved with the sequels to **Faces of Death**?

JAS: I did the first three, but then I bowed out. I wanted to do other things.

DVD World: Can you share any memories of the film's initial opening?

JAS: My brother went down to 42nd Street to see it, and he told me that there were those two guys seated behind him, and one guy said to the other, "Wait until you see the next bit." So he was seeing it the second time, and had brought his friend along. That was so unbelievable. I hear of people who have **Faces of**

Death parties. They get crazy and watch the movies. It still amazes me how much people have embraced these films.

DVD World: Faces of Death 2, appears to have far less faked footage.

JAS: Yes, in the second film there was definitely more real footage. But there were always segments that were faked. The guy who goes into a drug store in the second one - in the hostages segment - that was me. And in **Faces of Death 3**, the rapist on trial... that was me as well. The girl who got raped was the same girl who I was dating at the time. She was an exhibitionist so she was into being in it (laughs).

DVD World: There's a sequence that's been picked up on in **Faces of Death 2**, where the narrator chimes in: "The enemy must be destroyed at all costs... even if he is a child" - and we see footage of war torn Lebanon. Can you explain why this narration would accompany such a harrowing sequence?

JAS: I don't really remember that line. It's sort of a grey memory to me, but I am amazed how many people do remember the films. Some things I read or see, like with the American author Dean Koontz, in his latest book he quotes **Faces of Death**. Then there's the television show, **The Sopranos**, and last season Tony Soprano walks in on a character watching television and says, "I can't believe you're watching **Faces of Death**." And **Beavis and Butt-head** compared a music video to **Faces of Death** on one of their shows...

DVD World: What was it like writing for the **Knight Rider** television series.

JAS: David Hasselhoff was my college roommate. David saw **Faces of Death**. He came to the first screening at Fox. He was there that night.

DVD World: How did you become involved with lecturing about **Faces of Death** at colleges?

JAS: I was talking to somebody and they said to me, "You should go and talk about these films." So I went and lectured at colleges in the United States and people love it! I'd like to say one last thing. In the end, death is the next frontier that each of us faces. I really believe you die the way you lived. If you live with fear, you die with fear. If you live with courage, you die with courage. A Sikh doctor told me something about death that I've never forgotten. He said when you die, you are in this tunnel where people from your life who've also died are summoning you. He told me not to join them and instead head straight for the light. I might do just that! •



KING OF THE



In the UK, Ruggero Deodato is synonymous with three films in particular – *Last Cannibal World*, *Cannibal Holocaust* and *The House on the Edge of the Park*, all of which are hyper violent and suitably censored in order to fit onto the shelves of your local Blockbuster. Indeed, rest assured that this particular horror movie buff is not a fan of these titles at all – and especially not *Cannibal Holocaust*, whose real life animal cruelty is nothing short of revolting. Indeed, I question the mentality that enjoys watching a four minute sequence wherein a live turtle is torn to shreds. I also wonder how anyone can get a kick out of seeing a monkey beheaded or watching any animal being tortured with a

switchblade. This isn't entertainment, folks, it is sadism – it isn't horror it is horrible and it certainly isn't disturbing, rather it is disgusting, something that it is important to make a distinction between. So, to put it bluntly - *Cannibal Holocaust*'s 'cult' following utterly bewilders me and if my girlfriend (a zoology graduate who had her Masters funded by the RSPCA after writing a passionate anti-vivisection essay) had sat down and watched it with me all these years ago I don't think we'd have lasted...

But, on the other hand, I also get mightily pissed off when people take a high moral ground over the film whilst remaining blissfully unaware how their hamburgers got onto their plate. Or happily enjoying their Proctor and Gamble cosmetics without realising that this stuff

got on the shelves through being force-fed to caged beagle puppies and primates. Indeed, it seems utterly feeble to get wound up over *Cannibal Holocaust* when every day - in the likes of Huntingdon Life Sciences - far far far worse shit is going on. And with the blessing of our own Parliament (certain MPs in the red and yellow corner aside) who will nevertheless cut chunks out of these ancient Italian horror movies, which I fully understand - but you get my point here...

So, to those of us who have seen undercover footage of such laboratories, *Cannibal Holocaust* is more akin to a Disney movie... which doesn't make it okay – especially when the film serves up animal slaughter in the guise of entertainment – but it also doesn't make it worth throwing a casket over. In other

Calum Waddell Interviews Ruggero Deodato, director of the most notorious video nasty of them all... Cannibal Holocaust!

THE ORIGINAL
RUMBLE IN THE
JUNGLE

words, if you want to scream and shout about animal cruelty then there are many worthwhile causes to consider rallying behind.

Right, that is my rant over. Now you know where I stand, let's talk about Ruggero Deodato.

Deodato is a strange case because he has a background in Italian art house cinema, courtesy of his mentor Roberto Rossellini, that may have once indicated an artist who would go on to craft sobering character studies and gain a reputation as a critical darling. For extensive background information about Deodato, including his work with Rossellini, Sergio Curbucci and such genre filmmakers as Antonio Margheriti and Riccardo Freda, one is happy to recommend FAB Press' definitive book on the director, which was released back in 1999.

Furthermore, it seems slightly unfair that Deodato has become synonymous with the horror genre when he has made so many types of movies over his career – including love stories (1978's *Last Feelings*), disaster epics (1979's *The Concorde Affair*), action (1983's *Atlantis Interceptors*, 1986's *The Lone Runner*) and a whole host of television work. Yet, it is because his two cannibal films, and the Wes Craven-inspired *House on the Edge of the Park*, are so graphically vicious that Deodato is still unable to escape from their shadow. Even though his later work in the horror genre, which includes 1985's *Cut and Run* (arguably his best movie) and the more upmarket *Phantom of the Death* (1988), is far tamer

largely because I (rather ashamedly) do not speak any Italian and this, coupled with my Scottish accent, meant that poor Deodato had to concentrate very hard to answer me. Even then, some of my questions were extremely difficult for him to understand – so my hat goes off to the director for being so incredibly tolerant. Consequently, talking to Deodato was a sobering experience – was this soft spoken, personable personality really the man that made *Cannibal Holocaust*? Read on...

Ruggero Deodato -
the soft-spoken,
personable director of
one of the nastiest
movies ever made...



stars – just normal for television.

It has been a while since we've seen a feature film from you, largely because you have been working in television. Do you plan on making a new feature soon?

I hope so (laughs), but I am busy until February just now. Maybe after that – I would like to do another movie, but at this moment it is difficult because there are not many pictures being made in Italy. There is no funding – the producers don't have any money at the moment.

Okay, let's backtrack a bit. You started your career working with Roberto Rossellini, tell me about your beginnings in the film world under his tutelage.

That's right, I started with Rossellini and I shot six movies with him – although I actually began with a serial that was done for television called *The Iron Age*. My first film with him was *Il Generale della Rovere* (1959) and later (in 1960) I shot *Era notte a Roma*, which starred Peter Baldwin. It is the story about the resistance in Rome during the last war. Later I shot on *Viva l'Italia* (1961) – a film about Giuseppe Garibaldi and then I did *Vanina Vanini* (1961). We based that on the work of a writer – he was an English writer (pauses) – ah, Stendhal (Note: Stendhal was French – but I only know this after a quick check up online). The last one I worked on was *Anima nera* (1962), which starred Vittorio Gassman.

You can make me very jealous by telling me that you met Ingrid Bergman...

Ingrid Bergman? Yes, when I was young I would go for a holiday at their (Bergman and Rossellini's) villa by the sea, and I would see Ingrid Bergman. I stayed with her for three months in the summer, so I knew Ingrid very well. I knew – when I was younger – that many, many important directors would come to the villa to visit Rossellini. I met Michelangelo Antonioni, for example. I feel like I was handed a career in cinema...

And you worked on *Django* as well – with Sergio Corbucci... you were working with some great filmmakers back in the day. Yes, and with *Django* I was credited as an assistant director but I actually directed the ending during two or three weeks in Spain – but in Rome I shot with Curbucci.

Before making your claim to infamy with *The Last Cannibal World*, you directed a number of movies that are less well known than your horror work. Do you have any favourites from this period?

Oh, I like them all (laughs). I like *Live Like a Cop, Die Like a Man* – but after that I like *Last Cannibal World*, *Cannibal Holocaust*, *The Barbarians*, *Dial Help* – I like all of these films.

JUNGLE!

than what came before, the filmmaker is forever remembered as, "That guy who hacked up a turtle in *Cannibal Holocaust*." Fair, or unfair, it is not for me to judge... but young filmmakers may want to learn from this – rest assured that everything you do early in your career is going to come back and bite you in the ass. Of course, in saying that, if you're thinking that no good horror movie is worthwhile unless some wildlife bites the dust, then you might want to go out and get some fresh air...

The following interview took place through my good friend David Hess, who was kind enough to organise it for me. I cannot lie - Deodato, speaking from his house in Italy, was a pleasant person to chat to and it was hard not to take a liking to this sobering old chap who patiently answered questions about scenes that he admits he wishes he had never shot in the first place. The interview took an hour –

First of all, Ruggero, thanks for agreeing to do this interview with me.

I have to tell you that I don't speak English very, very well (laughs)

Oh, you speak it fine – much better than my Italian.

I hope (laughs)

So, starting off, David Hess tells me that you have a new project underway. Can you tell me a little bit about it?

Yes - I am working on it now, I am shooting a serial. I am busy every day and I will finish it in February.

Is this a movie?

No, it is a serial for television – it has many, many stories to it. It has adventure, love, many things – it is typically Italian. All of the actors in it are Italian – they are famous, but only in Italy – they are not

Last Cannibal World is the obvious turning point in your career, of course...

I like it, I like it very much. This is the first movie that gave me popularity. I am not a violent man, but by this time (in my career) I had shot a lot of movies. In fact, I have shot everything. In Italy - normally the director has only one road, you know? Only comedy or violence or political films... but for me, no, it is different. I have shot everything - just like Spielberg (laughs). Like an American director I will shoot everything, and I like this more because I have done violent stories, love stories, comedies, commercials - I have made many commercials, for Ford, for Reno, for Fiat - many, many companies.

Truthfully - was it a real cannibal tribe in *Last Cannibal World* as you have claimed in the past?

Yes, really. In *Last Cannibal World* I shot with one family, one group. The cannibals were really cannibals - this was in Malaysia. We shot (some of the film) in the Philippines, in Mindanao the island, and that was fine, but in Malaysia they were really cannibals. I had the ranger with me, with a rifle, to protect me. But this was only in *Last Cannibal World* - in *Cannibal Holocaust*, no, they were normal Indios.

The most controversial aspect of your cannibal movies is, of course, the use of live animals. How did you obtain the animals to slaughter in *Last Cannibal World* and *Cannibal Holocaust*?

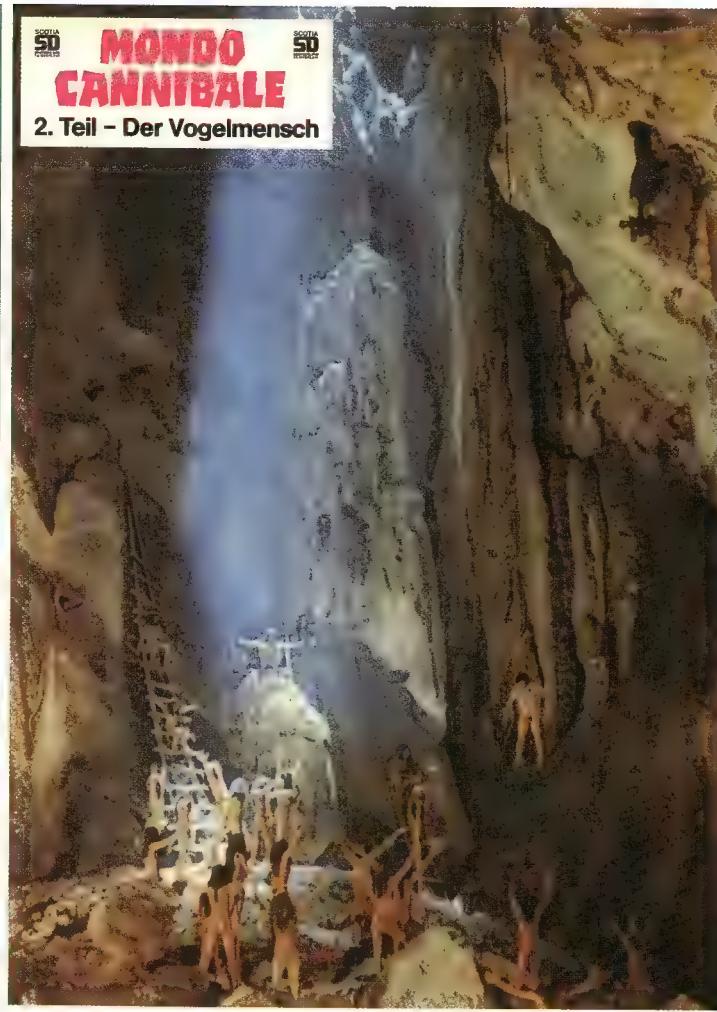
Normally, the tribes found them in the trees. The tribe will normally eat monkeys - they shoot the monkeys from the trees. So the tribe gave me the animals, they gave me the turtle, gave me the monkey - only the little pig was normal. The pig, we killed that ourselves - my team killed the pig so that, for the first time, we could eat pork because every day it was fish, fish, fish. I shot this scene (for the movie) - but it was for us.

When the tribe gave you a monkey was your first reaction not to just let it go rather than to kill it? That is what most of us would do. Was this stuff even in the script?

Eh... no - not that scene - but we wanted to see the food of the Indios, and the ranger said, 'Ah the tribe - they eat the monkey. If you want to film it, then they will kill the monkey.'

You are talking about the tribe eating and hunting but you also have your actors tearing apart a turtle on screen. Did they not have a problem with this?

Yes, especially the American actors. One particularly - the blonde guy



(Perry Pirkanen), he had some comments, but I don't remember.

Was that scene necessary with the turtle? It goes on forever, it is disgusting and it serves no purpose to the film...

Well, now, if it was possible to turn back time then I would not shoot any scenes with the animals because it was stupid to do that. But before the film, the marketing people all around the world wanted the animals - especially in the East, in Asia, and also in Germany. The marketing people would say, 'Ah yes - the animals, okay, animals!' But not the British...

It's funny you should mention that because I have seen the German trailer for *Cannibal Holocaust*. And if they did want to see animals being killed, then why is that not advertised in the trailer? Every trailer I have seen for *Cannibal Holocaust* hides any indication that animals are killed in the movie...

I don't know. You know there are some changes, tiny changes - they do different trailers for all the countries.

What about the animal scenes in *Last Cannibal World*?

I didn't kill the animals in *Last Cannibal World* - it was the producer

that put them in the movie. I did not kill the animals, I finished the movie and this was later. It is not my fault.

So you had nothing to do with the animal stuff in *Last Cannibal World*? No, I did not film the animal killings in *Last Cannibal World* - only in *Cannibal Holocaust* did I film them. But this was stupid of me. It is better to kill a man than to kill animals!

Tell me about filming in the jungles of Malaysia, and later South America, for your two cannibal pictures.

In Malaysia it was very difficult because it was so strange - it is real jungle. In Amazonia it was easier because the jungle is more open. It was also easier (to work) with the Indios because they have seen more of the outside world and the rivers are open to people. In Malaysia it was much more difficult because the jungle was really a jungle - it was also very far from the big city. I went with the film team, my group, in a canoe for seven hours - with all of the equipment - just to get to the location... But it is very nice in the jungle in Malaysia because they have delicious fruit. Massimo Foschi, the actor (in *Last Cannibal World*), was very strong - he would do everything - so he was fine in the jungle.

Did Lamberto Bava work on *Cannibal Holocaust* as well as on *Last Cannibal World*? (Note: Apparently he was only listed on the crew of *Holocaust* for quota reasons - c.f. FAB Press' excellent book on Deodato)

Lamberto Bava - he worked with me only on *Last Cannibal World* because he liked the script. But he never worked on *Cannibal Holocaust* - I put his name on the film, but only his name. One day, on *Last Cannibal World*, a little snake bit Lamberto Bava. We had many, many snakes for putting on the set. But the animal handler, he would take out the poison first. So I was talking to Lamberto and I asked him to put some snakes on the set. I told him to be very soft. He was to take the snake by the head, softly, because they can bite. So I would do it soft, but Lamberto takes the snake by the head, strongly, and it turns around and bites him! He goes, 'Ah - my hand is going white,' but the animal handler told him that there was no poison (in the snake). But Lamberto was afraid. He went back to Kuala Lumpur to the hospital, but there was no problem (laughs).

For *Cannibal Holocaust* your star was Robert Kerman...

Robert Kerman, yes, he worked with me before on *Concorde Affair*, but it was just a little role. I was shooting in New York, in an airport, and (after that) I knew him so when I came back to New York to cast for *Cannibal Holocaust* I remembered him and I put him in the movie. Don't talk (laughs) - don't talk about his porno films because I did not know about this before... Really, I did not know about this. People still want to talk to me about that (laughs).

With *Cannibal Holocaust* why did you make such a horrible film, Ruggero? It is one of the most violent films I have ever seen - it is nasty...

The reason - I have explained this in the past - is at this time in Italy we had a problem with terrorists and there were so many, many television reports that showed people killed. My son would cry every day and I was angry about that, and when I was shooting the movie I knew it was only going to be for people aged 18 years and older, but when something is on television it is free for everyone to watch. The part of the story where the journalists do everything they want - well sometimes when they film the scoop they are inventing the scoop. You see, I wanted this part of the movie to be very strong - I was making that for the journalists, not for me. The second part of that film is only for the journalists - it is different from *Last Cannibal World* because that was just a normal story. It is about a man clashing with nature. That film was a big success and the marketing



'When I was shooting the movie I knew it was only going to be for people aged 18 years and older, the part of the story where the journalists do everything they want – well sometimes when they film the scoop they are inventing the scoop.'

people ask me for another movie with cannibals, which was *Cannibal Holocaust*.

Riz Ortolani gave you a memorable score for *Cannibal Holocaust*... Yes, he is very nice. I wanted him for *Cannibal Holocaust* because I liked, very much, *Mondo Cane* – and his song *More*. From that I knew he would do a wonderful (soundtrack) for my movie, but I did not want him to be upset by the film. When I showed him the movie he said, 'I like it - maybe it is strong but I think that you are a very good young director.'

Is it true that Sergio Leone saw *Cannibal Holocaust* and liked it? Yes, and he said that the second half of the movie was very important. He said, 'Maybe you will have many, many problems with this movie but the second half is fantastic.'

Any idea when the American DVD for *Cannibal Holocaust* is going to come out? I don't know but there are many good DVDs of it out just now – Germany, France, Italy – they are all good. *The Last Cannibal World* is also out, but it is not very good – but *Cannibal Holocaust* it is very good.

It has come out in Britain as well, you know, but with the animal footage removed.

I didn't know that – I would like to see it (A quick swap of email addresses follows – Vipco no doubt has one new customer!)

Talk to me about your working relationship with David Hess... Well he worked with me on many, many movies (laughs)

Yes, so you obviously have a fondness for each other and he speaks very highly of you. Tell me about casting him in *House on the Edge of the Park*. I saw David Hess in *Last House on the Left*. He is a very strong actor – strong face. I liked doing this movie with him. I used him for many movies – I think maybe five – but now it is more difficult... Two months ago I was asked about shooting a movie in

Brazil. If I am shooting this movie then maybe I will have David for a part.

Are you still fond of *House on the Edge of the Park*? Again, it is a very violent, nasty film...

Yes, it is very strong and, now, I think that it is modern – it has not aged. I saw it again one month ago and I thought that maybe it would be like watching an old movie but, no, it does not seem old. I don't like the violence... maybe there is too much violence, but it is nice – nicely filmed.

I think the third part in your jungle series – *Cut and Run* – is the best of your horror films. I like it much better than *Cannibal Holocaust*, and there is no use of animals...

I like it more too, but the trouble is that *Cannibal Holocaust* had more originality. *Cut and Run* is a good movie, but the problem was the actor (*Cut and Run* utilised former television star/pin-up Willie Aames). When you

'Come in number six, your time is up!' A boat trip goes pear-shaped in Deodato's *Cut and Run*...

have a famous actor it can be difficult because you must expect a big temper from him! So it was not like *Cannibal Holocaust* – that was very

easy, more straightforward, but this was not – *Cut and Run* was a bigger movie, but I like it.

Wes Craven was originally slated to direct *Cut and Run* – why did that not transpire in the end?

Yes, Wes Craven was the first contact for the producer and he wanted to shoot the movie in Colombia, but then the producer changed his mind because maybe – at that moment – I was a bit more famous than Wes Craven. Now, of course, he is a lot more famous than me (laughs). But they changed the script and called me – because after *Cannibal Holocaust* they wanted another movie like that.

Michael Berryman boasts a memorable presence in *Cut and Run* – and he speaks highly of you as well... I love him as a person and as an actor. He is very nice and I like him a lot. We also had Richard Lynch in *Cut and Run*, who was very good.

You mentioned to me earlier that you rate *The Barbarians* highly, and at \$4 million this is probably the biggest budgeted film you ever worked on. Yes, I like *The Barbarians* because, for me, I wanted to shoot a fantasy movie

that was more comical. It was a big project for the Cannon group and I enjoyed shooting that movie. I changed the whole movie because it was to be so serious, serious, serious... but when I saw the stars – Peter and David Paul – in real life they would fight every day (laughs), so I brought that to the movie. I liked the story very much.

You made three giallo movies after *The Barbarians*, the first of which – *Body Count* – is most similar to the American strain of stalk and slash movies...

Body Count – I don't like this movie. I don't know – maybe the story was wrong. I don't like zombie movies and this film is little like a zombie movie, so I don't like it.

What about *Phantom of Death* and *Dial Help*?

I like *Dial Help*, I like that because it is strange – all the stuff with the telephone. The other movie I did – the one with Michael York (*Phantom of Death*) – I like that too. Maybe it is a bit too long but I enjoyed making it because I worked with two fantastic actors. Michael York and Donald Pleasence were just terrific. Donald Pleasence, for me, is a great actor.

Your last horror movie was *The Washing Machine* in 1993...

This movie was not actually shot in Italy – I shot it for a French producer. I love it for the location, but maybe the story is too soft... I don't know, but I like the location and the style.

Do you like the work of the other famous Italian horror directors? Dario Argento is still going strong – and then you have Michele Soavi, Lucio Fulci...

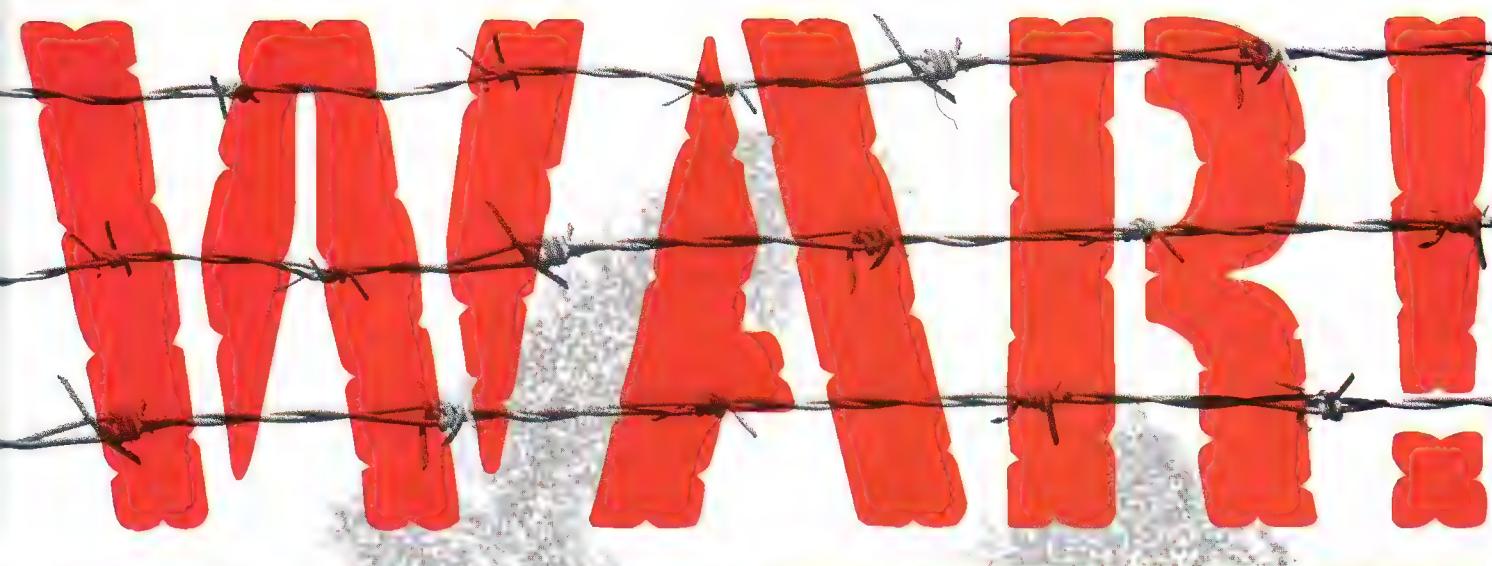
(On hearing Fulci's name) Oh – I like Lucio Fulci very much – I like Soavi too, he was my assistant on a movie. Dario is Dario – I like his first movies, his last film I did not like.

What about Umberto Lenzi?

I haven't seen many movies by Umberto Lenzi (laughs). But he is a friend now. Once he was an enemy but now he is a friend (laughs). •



Don't mention the



Greta Von Schticklegrüber examines the history of Nazi Video Nasties from They Saved Hitler's Brain to Ilsa, She Wolf Of The SS!

I once knew a couple who went along to fetish clubs dressed in World War 2 Nazi outfits. He'd be the SS commandant and she'd be the pig-tailed Hitler Youth, all ready for a damned good spanking. They enjoyed this little fantasy, because it was just so taboo, them being Jewish and all, and because those uniforms were seriously sexy... er, if you were into that whole sub-dom routine.

These days, such taboos can no longer be violated at clubs like Skin Two's Rubber Ball or the Sex Maniac's Ball, where pro-faced organisers have decided that Nazi uniforms are politically incorrect (like whipping your partner is PC?) and likely to offend thin-skinned trendies. Some sixty years after the war ended, it seems that sensitivities are being heightened, not lowered.

It's hardly surprising then that the most notorious, indefensible, loathsome and reprehensible movies ever made are those which attempt to give viewers boners by exploring nasty Nazi sex fantasies. Even the most liberal of critics seem reluctant to defend these goose-stepping abominations, and they sit at the top of that sorry list known as the Video

Nasties. Me, I'm no different to the mass of lily-livered wussies out there, and wouldn't dream of suggesting that any of these films might be entertaining in any way, shape or form... but as Criswell says in *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, the story must be told...

Truth is, the cinema industry has been exploiting the Nazi nightmare since the war ended. Cheesy B-movies like *Hitler's Madmen*, *They Saved Hitler's Brain* and *She Demons* exploited the idea that mad Nazi scientists were up to mischief in remote South American jungles, and when the Sixties saw the loosening of censorship rules, it was obvious that the genre would take on a much more lurid appearance.

Unable to show much actual sex, mid Sixties adult films would fill the gaps with violence, often S&M tinged. Showing a disregard for any sense of taste or decency, it was clearly only going to be a matter of time before some enterprising producer realised the - ahem - erotic potential of the Nazi concentration camp. That man was Bob Cresse, and his film was the



Frauleins in Uniform

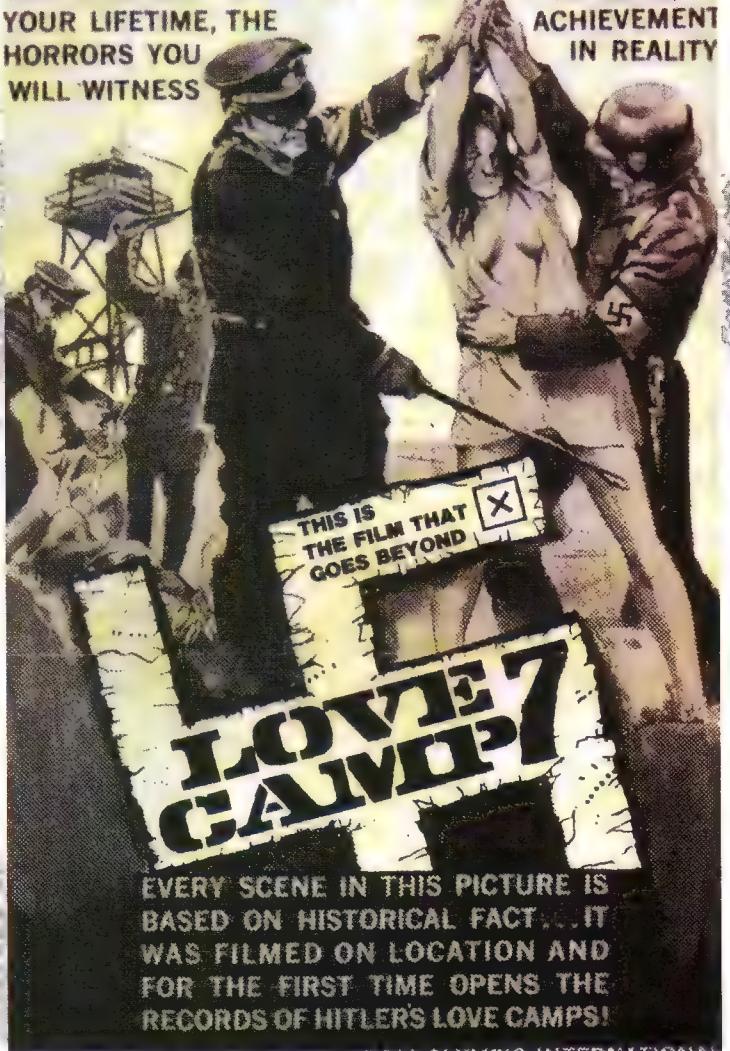
Brigitte BERGEN Karen HESKE Elizabeth FELCHNER

notorious Love Camp 7, a worryingly personal movie.

Directed by Lee Frost, the film sets the ground rules for the flood of titles which came almost a decade later. It tells the story of two American female spies who are sent to a Nazi "love camp" in order to help another

YOU WILL NOT FORGET IN YOUR LIFETIME, THE HORRORS YOU WILL WITNESS

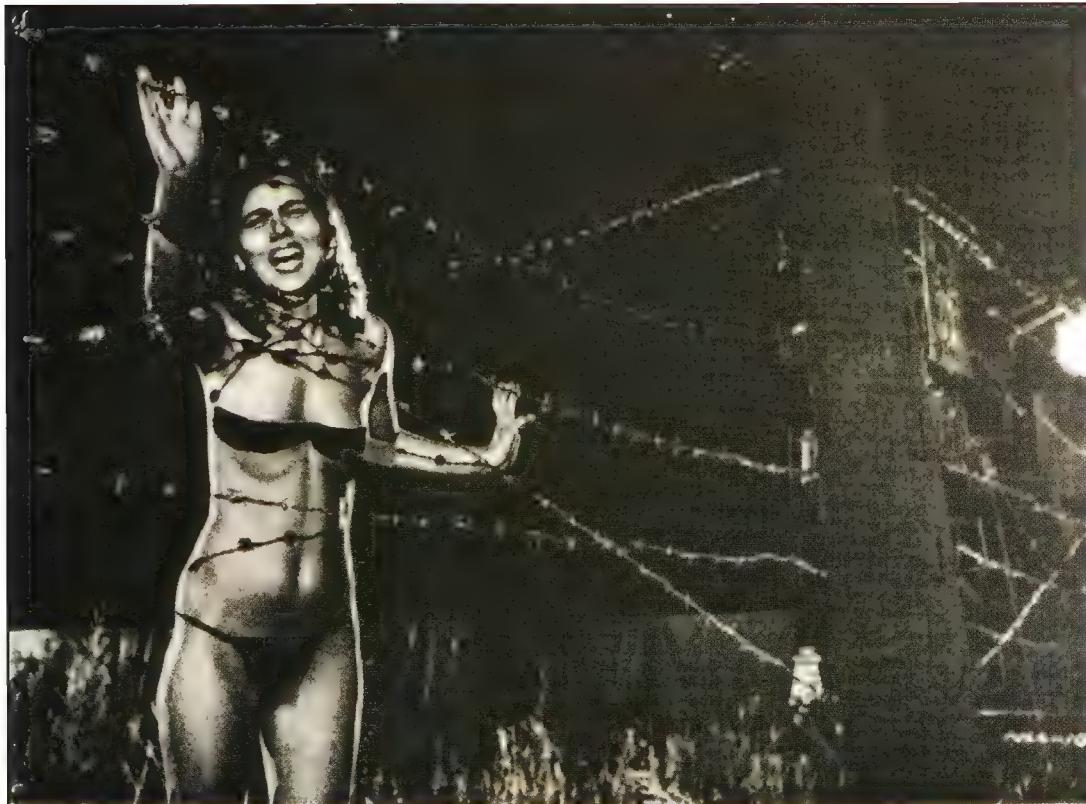
THE ULTIMATE ACHIEVEMENT IN REALITY



Okay, so they are the most notorious, indefensible, loathsome and reprehensible movies ever made. But you've got to admit that these Nazi nasties do contain some very fanciable frauleins...

informant escape. This they do, but only after an hour of unrelenting torture and abuse. Women are raped, whipped, strapped to unspeakable devices and generally treated like scum throughout the film.

Cresse himself played the Commandant with a barely disguised glee. The story goes that he was, to a large extent, living out his own sadomasochistic fantasies in the film, and stories abound about how he would insist on take after take of the torture scenes, until the suffering on screen was matched in reality by the actress. Who said making movies was fun?



A GROUP 1 PRESENTATION

Ilsa Love Camp

STARRING
SIRPA LANE/CARL SISTI/ROBERT POST
MIKE MORRIS/CHRISTY BORG
BLAZING COLOR

77-704C

A PLACE OF TOTAL DESPAIR
All the youthful beauty of Europe enslaved
for the pleasure of the Nazi Reich



After this pioneering effort, the genre was suspiciously quiet until 1973. It was then that sleaze producer David Friedman decided that the time was right to revive the dubious concept. He went to Canada and produced *Ilsa, She Wolf Of The SS* under the pseudonym Herman Traeger, a name that remained shrouded in mystery until Friedman finally owned up a couple of years ago. Why the false name? Perhaps some things were just too sleazy for even "The Mighty Monarch of the Exploitation Film World" to admit to.

And *Ilsa* is very sleazy.

The title role was taken by busty nightclub performer Dyanne Thorne, who attacked the part with relish. She's a cold, heartless sadist who is first seen castrating a male prisoner who is of no further sexual use. During

the rest of the film, she tortures women, takes part in appalling experiments, and has sex with the only male inmate (American, of course) who can satisfy her.

Ilsa, She Wolf Of The SS is a breathtakingly tasteless affair, yet it does have a (warped) sense of humour. Much of the action is so

OTT it teeters the film into the realms of camp, and it's this which saves the film, and has made it the only one of the genre to maintain a following - you can buy the DVD in America, complete with director, producer and star audio commentaries! Two sequels followed, though neither had

Nazi storylines, instead having *Ilsa* as entirely separate characters in each.

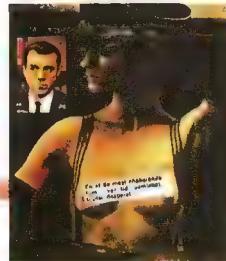
While *Ilsa* was shaking the drive-ins, the art house theatres were rocking to *The Night Porter*, in which Dirk Bogarde and Charlotte Rampling indulged in assorted



Above and left: Busty Las Vegas showgirl Dyanne Thorne nabbed the role of *Ilsa, She Wolf Of The SS*. Her Jewish husband didn't approve, but what the heck, a gal has to make a living... Opposite: A bra was later painted on to the UK video cover for *S.S. Experiment Camp*, but the film itself remains resolutely un-PC!



Dirk Bogarde, Charlotte Rampling
NATPORTIEREN

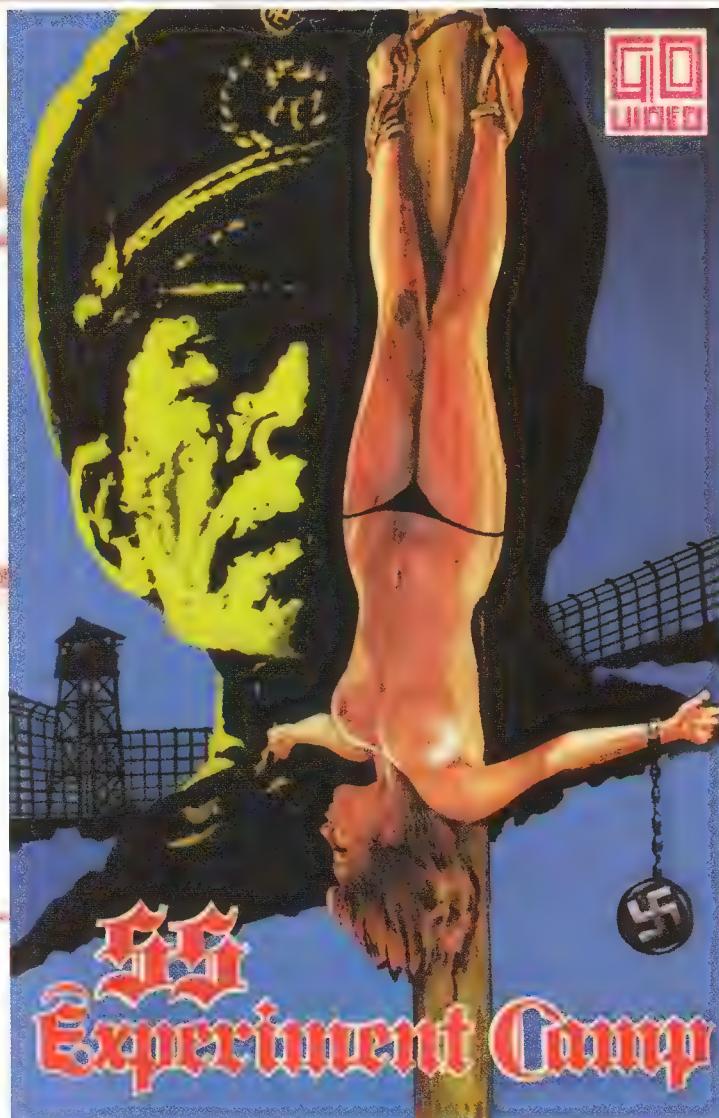


sexual antics that stopped well short of the atrocities performed by Ilsa, yet still dwelled indulgently in uniform fetishism and Nazi decadence. The film was another box-office success, and suddenly, the Italians - never slow to spot a trend - began to sit up and pay attention.

The floodgates were opened in 1976 by *Salon Kitty*, which managed to combine the sleaze of Ilsa with the artiness of *The Night Porter*. The masterpiece of Nazi sleaze cinema, Tinto Brass' film switches from making serious political points about the impotence of fascism (often with heavy handed political symbolism) to lip-smacking scenes of sexual perversion with alarming ease. It also established another great Nazi exploitation plot-line:

Salon Kitty is a brothel with an ulterior motive. SS officers use hidden microphones to listen out for any soldiers who might be less committed to the Nazi cause than they should be.

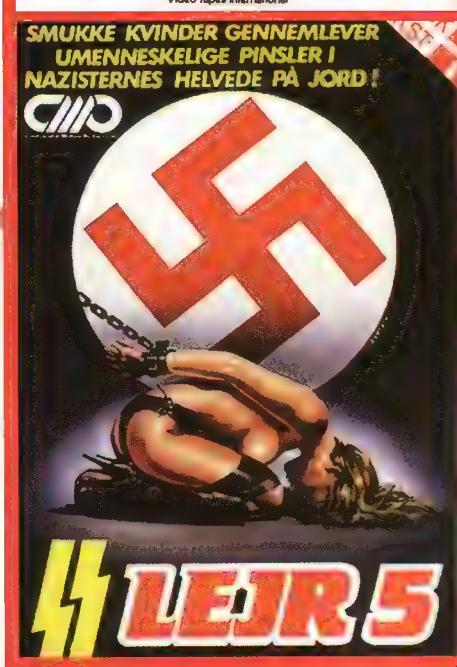
Salon Kitty was followed by a frenzy of titles. Best known of these in Britain is *SS Experiment Camp*, which was one of the original Video Nasties, thanks in no small part to Go Video's enthusiastic advertising campaign. The enterprising label took full page adverts



in the top video magazines, showing the film's cover - a topless girl, crucified upside-down. Some magazines found the image offensive, so Go supplied a version that had the breasts covered by a bra. This version was, apparently, considered perfectly acceptable.

After all that, the film is quite ordinary, but there are a couple of stand-out moments. The evil camp Commandant is devoid of testicles, and so decides to take those belonging to the one nice-guy guard who

OTHER NASTY NAZI FLICKS



THE GENTLE TOUCH!

There were also a number of less brutal films exploiting the uniform fetish.

Gestapo's Last Orgy and *SS Girls* were blatant imitations of *Salon Kitty* and *The Night Porter*, while *Red Nights Of The Gestapo* was a fairly sumptuous affair that tended to concentrate on the decadence of the SS top brass.

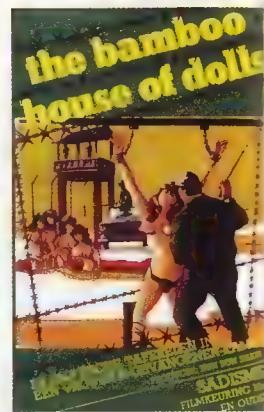
Elsa - *Fraulein SS*, on the other hand, was cheap and deliciously tacky. Other Euro-sex films using Nazi motifs were *Frauleins In Uniform* (which dealt with the army adventures of female German officers) and *Special Train For Hitler*. All aboard for feels on wheels!



The RED NIGHTS of the Gestapo



“You bastard! What have you done with my balls?”



Hong Kong movies like *Bamboo House Of Dolls* (left and below) replaced those nasty Nazis with brutal Japanese, but the end result was the same. Below: (inset) It's party time on one of the *Red Nights Of The Gestapo*.



hates what is going on. This is done via some gruesome medical stock footage. Our hero is then seen having sex with his girlfriend, at first blissfully unaware that anything is amiss. Once the awful truth emerges, however, he rushes into the

Commandant's office and screams the immortal line, "You bastard! What have you done with my balls?"

As for the rest of the movies: *The Beast In Heat*, *Last Days, SS Camp 5 - Women's Hell*, *Deported Women Of The SS Special Section*, and the particularly unpleasant *Women's Camp 119...* all have moments of outrageous bad taste, but are mainly dull, with mind-numbing footage of partisans and battle-field stock footage padding out the moments between softcore groping and limp



of cinema's most short-lived genres. Most of the movies haven't even resurfaced on DVD.

Given the state of society, it's understandable that some people will be upset at the idea of Nazi fantasies. But I've never yet come across a genuine fascist among fans of this grubby sub-genre. If we can laugh at *Allo Allo* (okay, no-one can laugh at *Allo Allo*, but you know what I mean...), then we can be amused by these cheesy, high camp exercises in bad taste without feeling guilty about it.

In fact, it's probably our duty to do so, reminding ourselves that when all's said and done Nazis are little more than a bad joke in a good uniform... ●

flagellation. None are recommended.

Meanwhile, American porno producers were dabbling in the concept with *Prisoner In Paradise* and *Hitler's Harlots*. But for whatever reasons, the theme didn't catch on in the porn theatres. In Hong Kong, film makers replaced Nazis with Japanese invaders and unleashed the likes of *Concentration Camp For Girls* and *Bamboo House Of Dolls*, the latter of which was used as an example of the worst excesses of cinema by British censor James Ferman during lectures on censorship.

By 1978, the Nazi sexploitation genre was all but dead. Perhaps the moral outrage and censorship problems which greeted such films proved to be too much trouble for producers only interested in profit. Who knows? Whatever the reason, there hasn't been a single significant addition to the cycle since, making it one

TRILOGY
OF TERROR!

NEAR

NASTIES

A poorly researched Channel 4 documentary on "video nasties" recently perpetuated the ongoing myth that Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) was "at the top of the DPP's nasties hit list". In fact, although Hooper's follow ups *Death Trap* (1976) and *The Funhouse* (1981) did both appear on that list, his barnstorming horror debut (originally released on video by Iver Film Services) was never officially tagged with the dreaded "N" word, probably because it boasts virtually no explicit blood or gore at all. After the enactment of the Video Recordings Act in 1984, *TCM* was kept off the nation's rental shelves for another decade-and-a-half purely on the whim of chief censor James Ferman, who objected to the film's "tone." Not until he retired, to be replaced by new censors with other axes to grind, was there any (legal) way to see what all the fuss was about.

TCM's story, such as it is, involves a camper van full of bratty teens which breaks down in the Texas boondocks. Its doomed inhabitants wander off in search of help, only to be taken in by a clan of Ed Gein wannabes who believe that the family which slays together, stays together. These redundant slaughterhouse labourers' idea of hospitality is decorating their rooms - and their plates - with the body parts of their reluctant guests. "Leatherface" (Gunnar Hansen) even fashions masks from their flayed visages!

Most of the kids are quickly chainsawed, sledge hammered, suspended on meat hooks, locked up in freezers, etc, but there's no such easy option for Sally (the splendid, subsequently underused Marilyn Burns). Tied to a chair whose arm rests are... well, arm rests, Sally is star guest at an almost unwatchable all night cannibal banquet (which feels like it's been shot in real time) as the freak family take turns tormenting her and generally having a good laugh at her plight.

Ultimately Grampa, apparently more dead than alive, is wheeled out to deliver the coup de grace, but his decrepit condition only allows him to strike a series of sickeningly inconclusive

John Martin runs his beady critical eye over a trio of gore movies that somehow escaped the DPP's 'Nasties' list: The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, City Of The Living Dead and Mark Of The Devil...

Who will survive
and what
will be
left of
them?

THE
TEXAS
CHAINSAW MASSACRE™

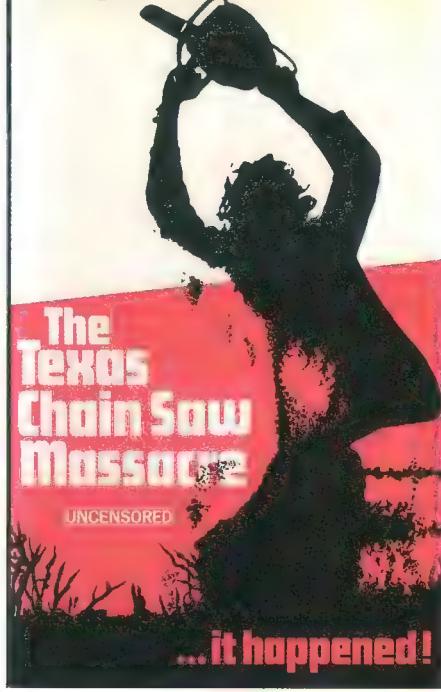
America's most
bizarre and
brutal crimes!

What happened is true. Now the motion picture that's just as real.

THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE • A Film by TOBE HOOPER. Starring MARILYN BURNS, PAUL A. PARTIPERI, EDWIN NEAL, JIM SIEDOW and GUNNAR HANSEN as "Leatherface". Production Manager, RONALD SOLMAN. Music Score by TOBE HOOPER and WAYNE BELL. Music Performed by APKEY BLUE, ROGER BARTLETT & FRIENDS, TIMBERLINE ROSE, LOS CYCLONES. Story & Screenplay by KIM HENKEL and TOBE HOOPER. Producer/Director, TOBE HOOPER. COLOR. A BRYANTSTON PICTURES RELEASE.

R RESTRICTED

can you survive



hammer blows as the other ghouls hold Sally's head over a bucket. In the confusion Sally escapes, but as she returns to "the real world" on the back of a passing truck, her gibbering reaction to what she can see in the dawn's early light - Leatherface's climactic chainsaw ballet - gives us grounds to suppose that she's parted company with her marbles for good.

It is during these closing moments that we encounter the only hint of serious gore in this splatter movie milestone, as Leatherface falls and his still-revving chainsaw cuts part of the way into his leg. Over the years various people have attributed all manner of explicit violence to *TCM* that simply isn't in there (can it be purely coincidental that the other film which most frequently elicits this kind of phantom recollections is Hitchcock's *Psycho*, another cinematic adaptation of Ed Gein's notorious life and crimes?).

Like no other horror movie before or since, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* has the power to mess with the viewer's head as surely as it unhinges its protagonist. "There is no delight the equal of dread" wrote Clive Barker and Hooper is mining the fucking mother lode here. His picture is more evocative of the worst nightmare you ever had than the combined impact of a score of blood drenched imitators (and of course there were scores) could ever be. The picture's sledge hammer impact is down to a double whammy of technical artistry (Daniel Pearl's cinematography - which alternates between the naturalistic and psychedelic hyper realism, Bob Burns' charnel house set design, Wayne Bell's oft-copied but never bettered score of "found" sounds...) and a kind of raw, fly-on-the-wall documentation of the cast and crew's suffering as they worked epic shifts in the sweltering Texas heat, projectile vomiting their way around Burns' rapidly suppurating collection of animal (also, by some accounts, human) remains.

The increasingly risible series of sequels and remakes, despite their progressively bigger budgets - precisely because of their progressively bigger budgets - could never hope to capture the "tone" that Ferman found so

FULCI FAVOURITES

Lucio Fulci's *City Of The Living Dead* (1980) was the only one of his early '80s zombie quartet to escape the "nasties" list. Was this on account of his stated aim that the film (like *Texas Chainsaw*) would be long on tension and atmosphere, short on gore? Hardly - the finished product is way gorier than his *House By The Cemetery* (1981) and probably tops both *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (1979) and *The Beyond* (1981) in terms of mortifying physical violence... crusty-faced deadsters unravel intestines and pull brains from their victims' skulls to snack on, blood gushes from girls' eyeballs and one of them vomits up her digestive canal ("alimentary, my dear Lucio"). Naturally, when Fulci chooses to make a heartfelt antifascist statement, it comes in the shape of a retarded redneck (perennial Italo-splatter victim "John Morghe") having his brains drilled out by white trash barfly Venantino Venantini.

Confusion persists over the exact identity of the SFX technician who rendered all these magic moments. Officially the credit goes to Franco Rufini, who assisted the maestro, Giannetto De Rossi, on the other classic Fulci flicks of this period, but there is plenty of anecdotal evidence from others who worked on this film that De Rossi himself had a hand in all the disgorged entrails and squirming grey matter.

Morghe's black'n decker lobotomy (the denouement of which was trimmed in Vampix's original video release) puts the proverbial tin-hat on yet another priceless appearance by this cannibal movie hall-of-famer. When an overacting, badly lip-synched occultist warns that "at this very precise moment, in some other distant town, horrendously awful things are happening... things that will shatter your imagination!" Fulci cuts straight to a point blank mug-shot of our favourite gurning goon, who is staggering around aimlessly in a gale. He seems to do this a lot. His clothes are caked in filth and he lives in a derelict hovel with a blow-up doll. He is getting it on with this latex lovely when he notices a worm-infested baby decomposing in the corner of his room. His response to this is to roll his eyes and gibber maniacally, but then this appears to be his response to just about everything, especially the regular unwelcome visits he receives from the undead Father Thomas (whose suicide started off all this shit in the first place).

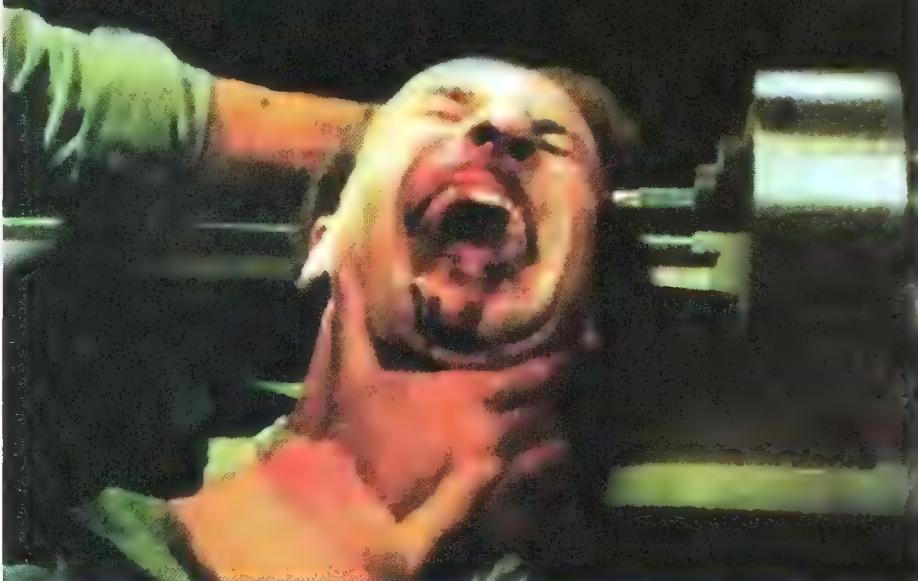
Bob isn't so stupid that he can't work out he'd better find someplace else to live. Pity he opts for the back seat of Venantini's car. Meanwhile the Dunwich cops discover various human remains in his former abode. "Good Lord" remarks Sheriff Russell: "That kid's gonna fry, mark my words!" If only he could have got off that lightly...

A general air of mystery enshrouds this film as tightly as the Savanah fog that seems to clog every frame. For instance why, after Catriona MacColl's medium has witnessed the suicide of Dunwich's resident Satanic priest and been charged with closing those *Gates Of Hell* before the imminent dawn of All Souls' Day, do she and Christopher George just wander around aimlessly until it's way too late to do anything about the oncoming catastrophe?

When I interviewed the very lovely MacColl she expressed her own dissatisfaction with the film's "leisurely sense of mystification" (to borrow a phrase from Kim Newman); she also related her considerable discomfort at being showered with creepy crawlies and threatened with puncturing by pickaxe during the scene in which George rescues her from premature burial; and like everybody else's who's ever witnessed the film's incomprehensible closing shot, she declares herself completely baffled about what it could possibly mean.

It's difficult to disagree with MacColl's verdict that this is probably the weakest of the three zombie films that she made with Fulci, but that only testifies to the high standards he was consistently hitting during his prolific early '80s purple patch. For all its faults (most of them stemming from a stubborn refusal of linear narrative strategies that is never mitigated by the kind of Lovecraftian logic that make *The Beyond*'s implausibilities and absurdities somehow strangely palatable), *City Of The Living Dead*, with the help of Sergio Salvati's predictably ravishing cinematography and another of Fabio Frizzi's toe-tapping Carpenter-esque electronic scores, is a solid crowd-pleasing effort that wallows in its exploitative excesses without any hint of apology.

Post-VRA a series of pitiful video re-releases lost all of *COTLD*'s splatter scenes. In these more enlightened times VIPCO's R2 edition is complete, though Anchor Bay's R1 effort, predictably looks way better and is much more smartly presented.



unacceptable. Since he's been gone, there have been any amount of R2 releases available... your best bet is Universal's Special Collectors' Edition, which it's possible to pick up quite cheaply these days and which contains a hatful of extras, notably Blue Underground's splendid *The Shocking Truth* documentary.

RATED V - FOR VIOLENCE

Michael Armstrong's *Mark Of The Devil* (1970) is another picture whose absence from the official "nasties" list is quite mystifying. "Positively the most horrifying film ever made"... "banned in 31 countries"... "the first film rated V for violence"... In the U.S. distributors Hallmark, also behind the OTT publicity campaign for Wes Craven's *Last House On The Left*, hyped MOTD by distributing airline-style barf bags with tickets, a gimmick later revived in the grindhouses for Umberto Lenzi's man-munching marathon *Cannibal Ferox*. And guess what - *Mark Of The Devil* lives up(?) to its hype. It was and remains one of the most physically gut-wrenching and philosophically bleak cinematic essays to ever emerge from the low budget horror scene.

In its title sequence (mysteriously shot... through the bottom of a beer glass, is my best guess) we find the local Witchfinder, leprous dandy Albino (the ever-startling Reggie Nalder) supervising the rape and murder of a coach load of nuns amid scenic Austrian splendour. Cut to the public execution of their abbott for alleged sorcery. His fingers are chopped off with a meat cleaver, then he's tarred, feathered and chased through the streets by a jeering, brutish mob till he drops dead. Ludicrous charges such as "fornicating with donkeys in caves" and "mixing blood with frogs and toads to spread impotence" are used to justify horrendous tortures for the sadistic enjoyment of Albino and his cohorts.

His personal reign of terror is terminated, however, by the arrival of Lord Cumberland (Herbert Lom) - "the mightiest challenger of devils and witchcraft" - whose mission is to extract confessions from up-market "witches" and confiscate their estates on behalf of the church. To this end various unfortunates are burnt alive, a young baron is sat on a nail-studded chair and has the soles of his feet caned, cameoing producer Adrian Hoven is subjected to the Chinese water torture and a young woman is racked, branded and - for the piece de resistance - has her tongue pulled out with pliers, all rendered in excruciating detail.

Cumberland's idealistic assistant Christian (a soulful looking Udo Kier, essaying his first leading role in a commercial picture) goes along with all this until his idol reveals feet of clay by offering clemency to comely "witches" in return for sexual favours, opening something of a Cumberland credibility gap.

When Lom's character strangles Albino for getting uppity (and getting a bit too close for comfort with his accusations of sexual dysfunction) it's the final straw for Christian, who releases all the prisoners. But he acts too late - Cumberland having managed to flee the revolting yokels, they turn their frustrated wrath on Christian, stringing him up and crushing him with what can only be described



as a giant, spiky and no doubt historically authentic nutcracker.

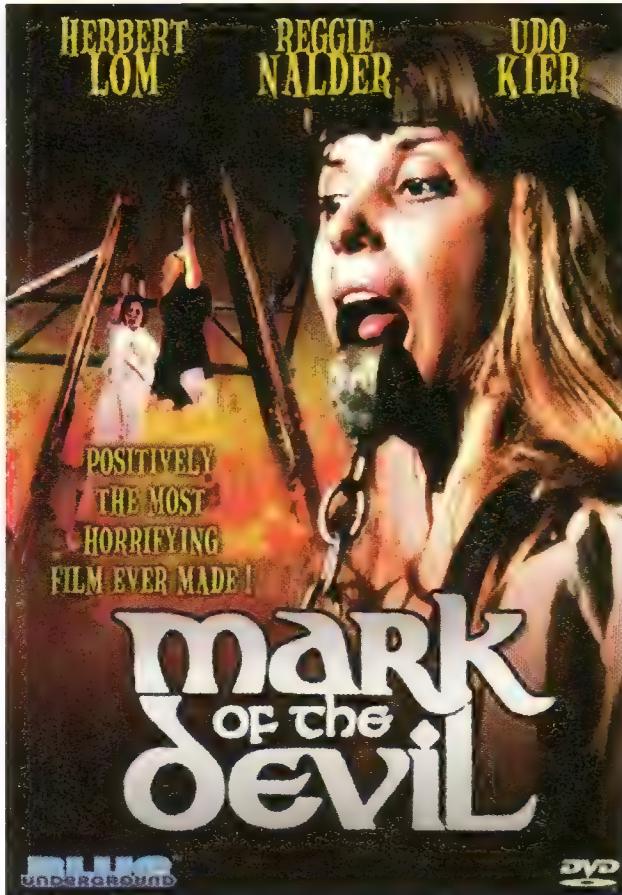
In his witty DVD commentary (and an interview on Anchor Bay UK's R2 edition) Armstrong makes much of the friction between himself and writer/producer Adrian Hoven, a sometime Jesus Franco associate also known as Percy Parker, although born Wilhelm Arpad Peter Hofkirchner. German distributor Gloriafilm had agreed to finance Hoven's projected *Witchfinder General* knock-off (originally entitled *The Witch Hunt Of Dr Dracula*) on condition that he renounce the directorial reins to more experienced hands. The hands that they had in mind were those of WFG director Michael Reeves, but his mental instability (and ultimately his untimely death) put paid to that. Gloria associated Armstrong (another of Tigon's house directors) with

Reeves and it didn't hurt at all that his previous feature, *Haunted House Of Horror* (1969) had done tidy box office in Germany, despite its troubled production history. Those problems with AIP, though, would prove to be kids' stuff compared with what Armstrong had to endure on *Mark Of The Devil*..

Authorised by Gloria, Armstrong (under the nom-de-plum "Sergio Casstner") completely rewrote Hoven's screenplay, axing its Egyptian mummy coach-driver (!) and various soft porn interludes.

During the film's five week shoot in the Summer of '69, however, Armstrong discovered that his wayward producer had not come up with the required script copies for his actors, and was still attempting to shoot *Witch Hunt Of Dr Dracula* behind his back, along with sentimental non-sequitur sequences featuring

Ludicrous charges such as “fornicating with donkeys in caves” and “mixing blood with frogs and toads to spread impotence” are used to justify horrendous tortures for the sadistic enjoyment of Albino and his cohorts.



the fledgling thespian “talents” of his young son Percy. Much of this stuff made it into the final cut of *MOTD*, but not Armstrong’s preferred ending, in which the shades of torture victims emerged from their graves to drag Christian’s body from the arms of his grieving girlfriend Vanessa, impressively played by feisty, bodice-defying strumpet Olivera Vucco.

Certainly *Mark Of The Devil* is nowhere near as well directed as *Witchfinder General*. Armstrong’s (or Hoven’s?) camera has an irritating tendency to zoom into people’s eyes or up their noses, and a piss-awful canned soundtrack doesn’t help.

Admittedly cinematographer Ernst Kalinke makes exemplary use of the ravishing Austrian landscape and locations, including a genuine medieval castle stuffed with authentic torture implements. The film is meticulously researched (the ludicrous indictments taken straight from contemporary court records) and production designer Alex Mellin has an exquisite eye for period detail. But no amount of “artistic merit” could ever have gained *MOTD* the respectability of BBFC certification that was accorded to *Witchfinder General*... I guess those barf bags didn’t help!

Mark Of The Devil packs all the graphic violence of *Witchfinder General* - and then some - but lacks the sharp characterisation, psychological insight and moral precision which made that film more than the simple bloodbath its detractors claimed it to be. Despite the compromised conditions of its production,

however, the sheer relentless piling of atrocity upon atrocity, establishing a chilling condemnation of irredeemably base humanity, ultimately transforms Armstrong’s one-note symphony of degradation into a bona-fide black work of art in its own right.

No self-respecting horror buff can be content without the Region 1 collector’s edition of *MOTD* from Blue Underground (hallowed be their name) on his shelf. Anchor Bay’s UK previous UK release and is a creditable effort, a beautiful anamorphic transfer that boasts a commentary track and equally entertaining interview featurette with director Armstrong, as well as informative notes and the standard trailer/galleries stuff.

However, while it is considerably longer than the 1993 Redemption video release (which was itself shorn of a brutal 4 minutes and 27 seconds in the wake of “nasties” witch-hunting nonsense), this Region 2 offering is still 32 seconds shy of completeness.

The Blue Underground edition is totally uncut (the first opportunity we old timers have had to catch *MOTD* in all its gory glory since Intervision’s VHS release in the brief, pre-VRA Golden Age of video).

It looks and sounds as beautiful as we have

**This VOMIT BAG
and the PRICE of
one ADMISSION will
enable YOU to SEE...**

the first film
rated V
for violence

Guaranteed
to upset
your stomach

**mark
of the
devil**

**POSITIVELY THE
MOST HORRIFYING
FILM EVER MADE**

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**SEE IT SOON AT A
THEATRE NEAR YOU**

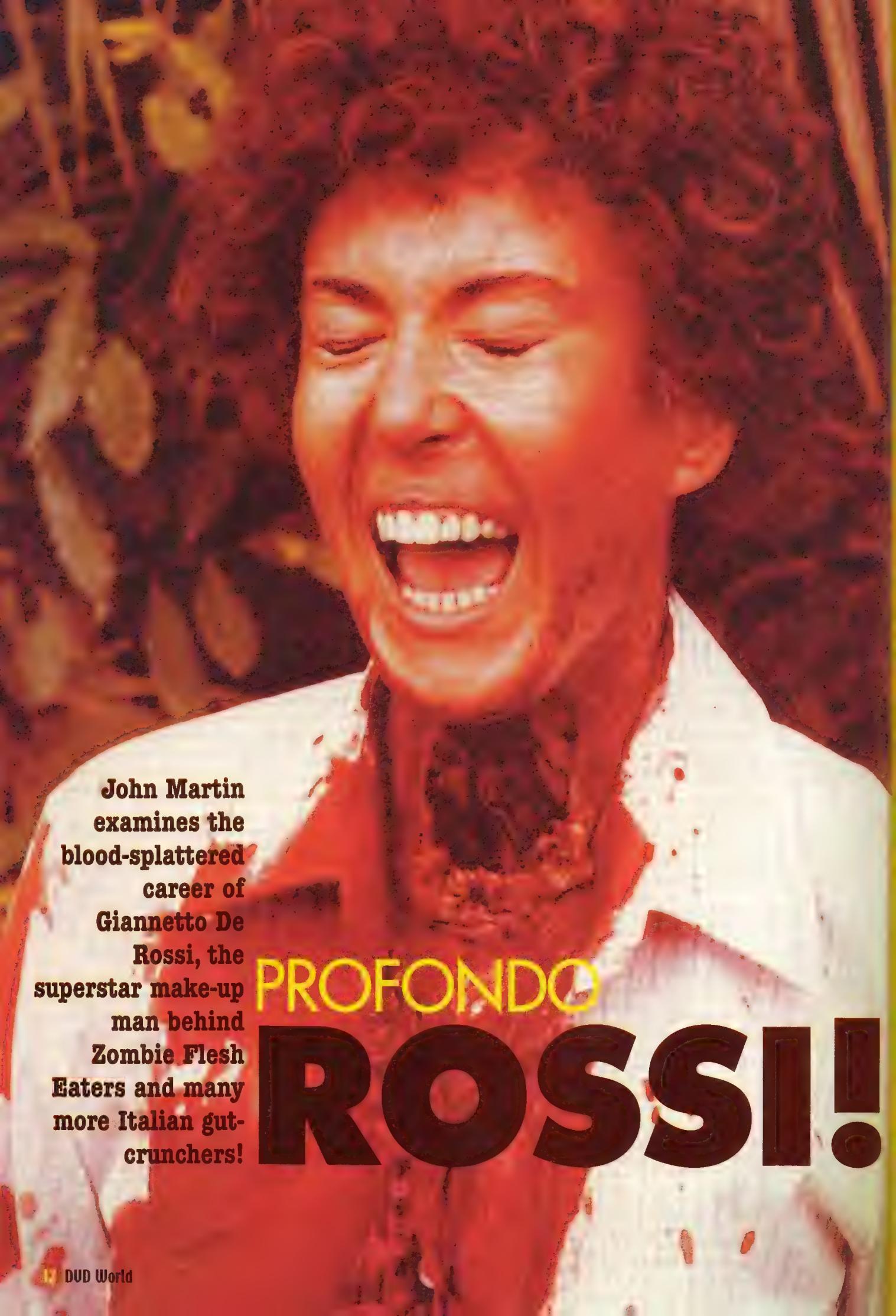
come to expect in this digital era and retains Armstrong’s commentary track, though not the filmed interview with him. In place of that, featurettes give

the retrospective perspectives of several of the principal players, including tongue-yank victim Gaby Fuchs (“Burn, Gaby, Burn!”); sinister witch hunting heavy Herbert Fux (“The Devil’s Torturer”); ill-advised puppet show impresario and (very aptly named) Ingeborg Schoener (“The Devil’s Assaulted”); and of course Mr Christian himself, Udo Kier (“Fear And Loathing In Austria”).

Kier comes across as testy and vain (“the only good things in this movie are my close-ups!”), in fact all of the interviews are good value for money, informative and entertaining, if rather underlit.

My favourite extra on this disc, though, has to be a collection of absolutely hysterical radio spots, including priceless lines like “the desecration of human mammals less than 300 years ago... ‘tortures pitting human appendages against cold, brutal steel... devices that made death a welcome pleasure’ and ‘this city is now being flooded with... stomach distress bags!!!’”

So you’d better play safe and get both editions, eh? •



John Martin
examines the
blood-splattered
career of
Giannetto De
Rossi, the
superstar make-up
man behind
Zombie Flesh
Eaters and many
more Italian gut-
crunchers!

PROFONDO **ROSSI!**



MIRACLE FILMS present
RAYMOND LOVELOCK • ARTHUR KENNEDY • CHRISTINE GALBO in
THE LIVING DEAD AT THE MANCHESTER MORGUE

Colour
X
C.E.R.T.

The 25th anniversary of Lucio Fulci's much loved **Zombie Flesh Eaters** brings us not one but two commemorative DVD editions, a Blue Underground effort struck from the original negative and Media Blasters' extras-laden double disc set.

There are many reasons why this opportunistic riff on **Dawn Of The Dead** continues to delight spaghetti slasher buffs, a quarter of a century after the event: Fulci's balls-to-the-wall direction, the sublime cinematography of Sergio Salvati, Fabio Frizzi's pulsating electronic score... For most of its admirers, though (and all its detractors) ZFE is synonymous with a series of outrageous set pieces, above all the unforgettable moment when Olga Vrakatos, under attack from putrefying dead dudes, gets her eyeball snagged on a 14-inch splinter.

The name of the man responsible for that momentous milestone of movie mayhem is a curiously apt one: Giannetto De Rossi ("Red Giannetto"). His spelling (note the two "n"s) is the sensitive one. Unfortunately (for those of us trying to chronicle his career), little else about the guy is so clear-cut. Particular difficulties are presented by the presence of Gino De Rossi, credited as SFX technician on several Italian efforts, who is often taken to be the same guy as Giannetto, though the latter strenuously denies this.

Oddly, although Giannetto comes from

a third-generation film family (grandfather Camillo was a noted director and actor), rich in FX artists (father Alberto, Massimo, Christina, etc) he doesn't even acknowledge the mysterious Gino as a relative, and to add another layer of confusion, various filmographies have Giannetto and Gino working on the same picture (e.g. Andrea Bianchi's ludicrous **Nights Of Terror**, Fulci's spooky **House By The Cemetery** and even James Cameron's inauspicious directorial debut **Piranha 2**)... quite a coincidence!

Complicating matters still further, some filmographies claim that Giannetto didn't participate in certain films that he himself insists he did work on. This tortuous saga has more twists in it than the plot of your average Dario Argento picture! Hopefully the following will elucidate more mysteries than it throws up. Here goes...

PLAYING DING DONG

Born in Rome 08/08/42, Giannetto De Rossi worked as a makeup artist on the Burton/Taylor **Taming of the Shrew** in 1967, then on Sergio Leone's epochal **Once Upon A Time In The West** the following year, creating bullet hits, wounds, etc. In the early 70's he alternated such prestigious gigs as **Waterloo** and **The Valachi Papers** with cheesy sex comedies like Pasquale Festa Campanile's **When Women Had Tails**, Bruno Corbucci's mind-boggling **When Men Carried Clubs**, **Women Played Ding-Dong** and **All'Onorevole Piaciono Le Donne**

(released in Britain as **The Eroticist**) by Lucio Fulci, the director with whom Giannetto would make such an impact ten years later.

Beyond possibly pinning the tails on those women in the Campanile film, De Rossi's efforts on this tacky trio amounted to little more than routine make-up chores, and it was not until Jorge Grau's 1974 Italo-Spanish co-production **The Living Dead At The Manchester Morgue** that he was first given the opportunity to shine in the field of gore FX.

Pertinent grisly highlights include the deserved disembowelling of a tittle-tattling telephonist and the similar demise of a Cumbrian copper. In another foreshadowing of great things to come, Giannetto had his first stab



Opposite: Aurelta Gay gets it in the neck in **Zombie Flesh Eaters**. Below: A maggoty-faced 'ghoul' from the same movie. Above and left: Who would have thought that the Manchester morgue could get so lively?

at multiple zombie make-ups in this picture, and laughingly recalls how he nearly blew the "old lady" zombie's head clean off her shoulders with one squib! Rumours persist of "missing footage" in which we would have witnessed the consumption of the aforementioned police officer's eyeballs. No matter, the world had not seen the last of eye-violence, De Rossi-style...

De Rossi's C.V. for the rest of the '70s ranges from the Art house to the outhouse, with credits that



MIRACLE FILMS presents

"ZOMBIE FLESH EATERS"

Colour



include Fellini's *Casanova* (1976) and, just one year later, Enzo Castellari's *The Inglorious Bastards* (a far-fetched war picture that Quentin Tarantino is keen to remake) plus Joe D'Amato's infamous *Emanuelle In America*, where Laura Gemser's expose of a snuff movie ring, played with characteristic tastefulness as a jolly soft-core romp, jars horribly with the gruelling nature of what she unearths.

This includes, along with the more routine horrors of gang rape, buttock branding, breast blowtorching, nipple hacking, giant dildo and meat hook impalement, and the forced consumption (like anyone would volunteer!) of boiling oil. These gore FX (and such is the grainy, fly-on-the-South-American-torture-dungeon-wall impact of the footage that many breathed a hefty sigh of relief when reassured that the atrocities really were staged effects) are attributed to Maurizio Trani in the film's credits, while De Rossi is credited as boom operator (?!).

But it has always begged credibility that he didn't have a hand in the splatter stuff, and when I met and interviewed Joe D'Amato he confirmed to me that this was indeed the case. Perhaps at this stage, having just worked for Fellini, De

Rossi wanted to distance himself from guts and grue, feeling that his future lay in more "upmarket" material.

Any such notion would have been bashed right out of his skull by the phenomenal success of George Romero's zombie epic *Dawn Of The Dead* and its drastic effect on Italian horror in general and the Latin living dead scene in particular. Completing his duties on Aldo Lodo's potboiling space-opera *The Humanoid* in 1979, De Rossi was to spend the next couple of years wallowing in a gore-nucopia of graphically gruelling delights.

The picture that really launched his legend, as already stated, was Fulci's *Zombie Flesh Eaters*. As well as the expected Romero lifts (the zombies' intestinal barbecue and suchlike), De Rossi, in nightmarish concert with Fulci, evidenced an audacious inventiveness that would prove the hallmark of the latter's zombie series.

WALKING FLOWERPOTS

We've already acknowledged the impact of Olga Karlatos' eye-squishing (socket to her, Giannetto!), and as for the underwater biting contest between a shark and a skinny-dipping zombie... words fail me, but Quentin Tarantino was

characteristically more vocal on this score, once confiding in *Yours Truly* that this was "the wildest sequence in any film" he'd ever seen. A genius for improvisational ingenuity is also behind the climactic zombie-torching sequence. Close inspection of which reveals that only one Molotov cocktail was ever tossed (and filmed from several angles) in the goiterdammerung of the grungy deadheads, a barnstorming sequence for all that. De Rossi is particularly proud of the unique look he attained for his zombies by the unlikely method of applying clay and pottery directly to the extras' faces - "Fulci and I called them 'the walking flowerpots,'" he told Italian journalist Loris Curci.

Bernardo Bertolucci (the man who nearly made *The Bird With The Crystal Plumage* but settled for a fistful of Oscars) was so impressed with our hero's work on *ZFE* that he later gave De Rossi a job on *1900*, but it was on the more, er, populist end of the market that the film's impact proved to be seminal. *Dawn Of The Dead* was forgotten as soon as Fulci's cash-in outperformed it at the box office, and every Italian entrepreneur with two lire to rub together joined in the scramble to emulate Fulci's success.

Luigi Cozzi's *Contamination*, made in the same year, characteristically attempted to combine the zombie boom with *Alien* fever, pitching *Flesh Eaters* star Ian McCulloch against pulsating Martian pods and kicking off with a Hudson Bay helicopter intro that replays the opening to Fulci's picture almost shot-for-shot. The Corridori brothers must carry the can for the woeful "alien Cyclops" who pops his one-eyed ugly mug up at the "climax" of *Contamination*, but the exploding innards that regularly decorate Cozzi's masterwork, and which caused much gnashing of teeth and clicking of scissors down at the BBFC, are all the work of our Giannetto.

With plenty more *ZFE* rip-offs in various stages of production in 1980, Fabrizio De Angelis figured "if you can't beat 'em join 'em" and decided to crank out a rip-off of his own production.

Zombie Holocaust borrows the Fulci film's Caribbean locations and again trots McCulloch out, to take on both zombies and cannibals, all under the control of psychotic surgeon Donald O'Brien. De Rossi is on hand, with trusty sidekick Maurizio Trani, to help McCulloch bore into a zombie's head with a handy dandy outboard motor and to render such additional magic moments as natives plucking out and feasting on an explorer's eyes, the doc's grisly brain transplanting antics, and some of the gloppiest, most laughable zombie make-ups this side of... well, this side of Andrea Bianchi's hysterical *Nights Of Terror* (1980), arguably the zombie

トクター
ブッチャー

DOCTOR BUTCHER M.D.

これこそ、狂気の悪魔生体実験
シンドローム!!



ZOMBIES UNTER KANNIBALEN

Darsteller:

JAN McCULLOCH · ALEXANDRA DELLI COLLI
SHERRY BUCHANAN · DONALD O'BRIEN
PETER O'NEAL · JOSEP PERSAUD

Regie:

FRANCESCO MARTINO

Eine Farbfilm-Produktion der Flora-Film S. r. l., Rom

genre's answer to **Plan 9 From Outer Space**.

This saga of overacting bit-players besieged in a villa by ancient Etruscan dead dudes "boasts" amateurish looking zombies who spurt orange blood when decapitated, eviscerated, etc., and a clumsy restaging of **Zombie Flesh Eaters**' most notorious moment, a pane of glass substituting for that bamboo splinter. Not that **Nights** is completely bereft of originality - the scene in which zombie gnome Peter Bark bites his mother [Mariangela Giordano]'s flapping chunk of latex, er... I mean her breast off stands as a film first, and thankfully looks as though it's going to stand as a film last.



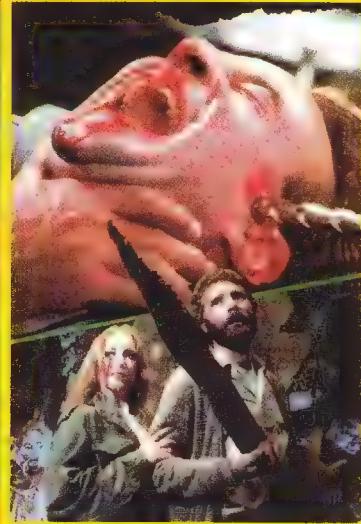
FRAYEURS
"LA PAURA"



La noche del TERROR

KARIN WELL · GIAN LUIGI CHIRIZZI
SIMONE MATTIOLI · MARIA ANGELA GIORDAN

Director ANDREA BIANCHI

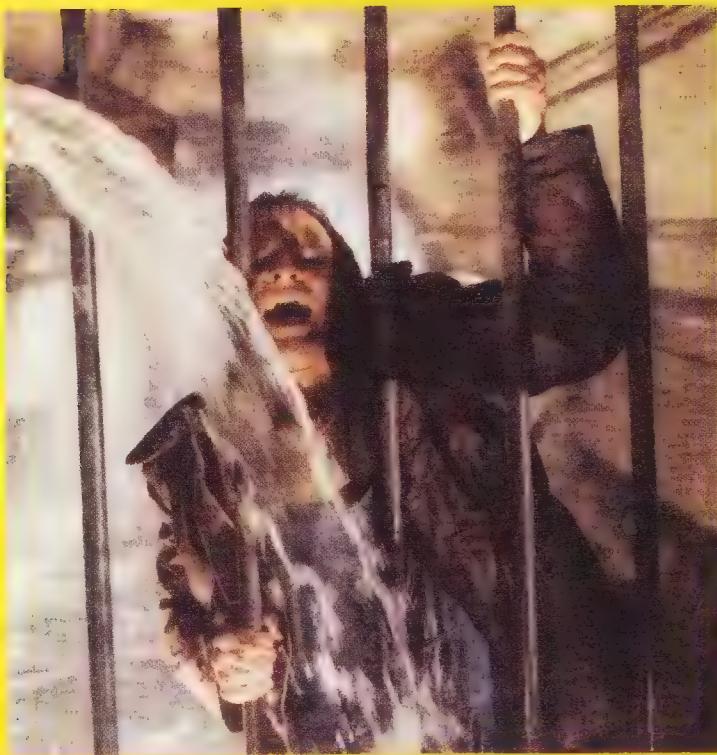


Opposite page: Olga Karlatos cops an eyeful in *Zombie Flesh Eaters*.

Above: John Morghen gets a low-budget lobotomy by drill in Lucio Fulci's *City Of The Living Dead*.

too! The fact that both Giannetto De Rossi and Gino De Rossi are cited as the men responsible for this movie's lamentable effects seems to lend credence to the idea that "Gino" is a name used by Giannetto when he doesn't want to fess up to his crappier efforts...

Having contributed to plenty of other people's attempts to ape a Fulci zombie movie, Giannetto next worked once again on the genuine article... or did he? It's often stated that De Rossi took a powder from **City Of The Living Dead** and left its FX in the capable hands of his assistant Franco Rufini, the man named in the film's credits, although Giannetto has spoken in interviews about contributing FX to the picture. This eccentric Italian attitude to accreditation is what simultaneously fuels and frustrates the efforts of those who make it their life's work to straighten out pasta exploitation filmographies (folks such as Gordon "credit doctor" Finlayson, to whom I'm indebted - as ever - for his assistance in attempting to unravel the Giannetto vs. Gino saga).



(Maurizio Trani) to the bloody hand of Giannetto de Rossi. The special effects in these films are certainly up to the high standard of his acknowledged work on the Fulci zombie pictures, and infinitely superior to some of the stuff in Fulci's post Fabrizio De Angelis period (notably *Conquest*).

Anyway, it's safe to say that De Rossi contributed FX to *City Of The Living Dead*, and to say otherwise would be to deny him some of the stand out achievements of his career: the Black and Decker trepanning of John Morghen, poor old Daniela Doria literally puking her guts up, and sundry brainectomies all stand up to scrutiny far better than some of Giannetto's contributions to the other Fulci zombie classic he worked on in 1980, *The Beyond*.

In that movie such sequences as the supernatural spider attack, Dicky the Dog's savaging of his blind mistress, and Joe the plumber's eye gouging are indeed, as the Aurum encyclopedia has it, "tackled with admirable gusto", but they're often also imperfectly executed. Check out those embarrassing pipe-cleaner tarantulas, the patently latex appliances that mar Dicky's finest hour, and Joe's eyelid apparently glued to his extracted orb, not to mention the two inch nail that seems to magically quadruple in length in order to enter the back of a Mrs Mop's skull and (you guessed) poke her eye out... a mystery worthy of investigation by the Warren Commission (expect a Michael Moore expose on the subject soon!)

On the plus side though, there's the excellent, gruellingly realised pre-titles chain whipping, crucifixion and burning of a warlock (De Rossi announcing himself particularly pleased with "that



great purple look" of this unfortunate character's acid-burned head) and, best of all, David Warbeck shooting daylight through the head of a bratty little girl.

De Rossi rounded off a hectic 1980 by working on Antonio Margheriti's *Cannibal Apocalypse*, supplying mainly bite wounds as man-eating Vietnam Vets John Morghen and Tony King go AWOL and mount an anthropophagous odyssey through Atlanta, Georgia. Rumours persist about the existence of a "much gorier" version of this movie, but after pursuing all leads, I've regrettfully come to the conclusion that this is just another of those anorak-fuelled urban legends.

Gino De Rossi (whoever he is) contributed gut-munching, eye-gouging, hand-lopping, dick-chopping, brain-scöffing and tit-piercing of a quality as high as anything on Giannetto's CV to Umberto Lenzi's *Cannibal Ferox* in 1981, the same year that Giannetto renewed his collaboration with Lucio Fulci in *The House By The Cemetery*. The gore score was rather low in this one (by Fulci's standards anyway, which still left room for knives and scissors embedded in heads, poker stabbings, throat slashings, etc) but the patchwork Dr Freudstein is an impressive creation, and his subterranean charnel house, in which little Giovanni Frezza finds himself trapped, a truly nightmarish one.

FISH GOTTA FLY...

In 1982 Giannetto signed up for *Piranha 2* (as allegedly did the mysterious Gino), the movie on which Ovidio Assonitis sacked James Cameron - which kind of makes him the film world equivalent of the music exec who passed on the Beatles! The tough time Cameron endured on this movie probably accounts for his legendary "hard guy to work for" persona... apparently the film was so under-resourced that Cameron was

obliged to lend De Rossi a hand in the FX shop, churning out the flying beaties that emerge to bite the faces off a bunch of beach revellers chanting "We want fish! We want fish!" (serves them right!).

Giannetto handled makeup chores on *Conan the Destroyer* (1984) and assisted Carlo Rambaldi on *Dune* and *King Kong Lives* (where he bemoaned the impossibility of making butch Linda Hamilton look sexy), also contributing FX to *Rambo 3* (1988), before he was rewarded for years of labour under another alleged hard ass, Fabrizio De Angelis, when that producer offered him the chance to helm *Killer Crocodile 2* (1989).

After thirty years in the business, and work on over a hundred pictures, De Rossi's directorial debut was a sequel to De Angelis' own picture from the previous year, a rip off of *Jaws* via Sergio Martino's *Great Alligator*. De Rossi's realisation of a whopping, nuclear waste-mutated croc was undoubtedly the high spot of this modest effort, and we get to see much more of it in De Rossi's maiden effort - almost all of it, in characteristic penny-pinching form for De Angelis, directly recycled footage from the first film! No doubt De Rossi had effectively had a hand in directing that stuff too, so we can concede *Killer Crocodile 2* as the FX ace's picture, while acknowledging that it was put together under such adverse circumstances as to provide little indication of his directorial skills, or lack of them.

I can't comment on his subsequent efforts *Cyborg* (which - like just about everybody else - I haven't seen), or Tammy his "cute monsters" opus, whose release remains tied up in litigation, but I have come to a conclusion about this "Gino" guy (who's also credited with work on *Holocaust 2000* (1977) *Exterminators Of The Year 3000* (1983), Ruggero Deodato's *Atlantis Interceptors* (ditto)... even Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor* (1987) and *Hudson Hawk* (1991).

Giannetto, meanwhile, has established an international reputation that has allowed him to continue working steadily despite the precipitous decline of the Italian film industry. Notably Stallone's *Daylight* (1996) and Claude Zidi's *Asterix and Obelix vs. Caesar* (1999) benefited from his expertise, and we can thank him for designing the mask that all-too briefly concealed Leonardo Di Caprio's smarmy countenance in Randal Wallace's *Man In The Iron Mask* (1998). Most recently he's been toiling on Uli Edel's *Kingdom In Twilight*, a Wagnerian adaptation that was green lighted after the runaway box office success of Peter Jackson's *Lord Of The Rings* trilogy.

Rest assured I'll be, er, keeping my eye out for more credits. •

NO GUTS, NO GLORY!

De Rossi wasn't credited for his stint on Argento's *Inferno* either (then again, neither was the immortal Mario Bava) and, given this track record of anonymous effort, it's tempting to ascribe the visceral outrages in Fulci's *Naples Connection* (officially credited to Germano Natali), *New York Ripper* (Franco Di Girolami and Rosario Prestopino) and *Manhattan Baby*

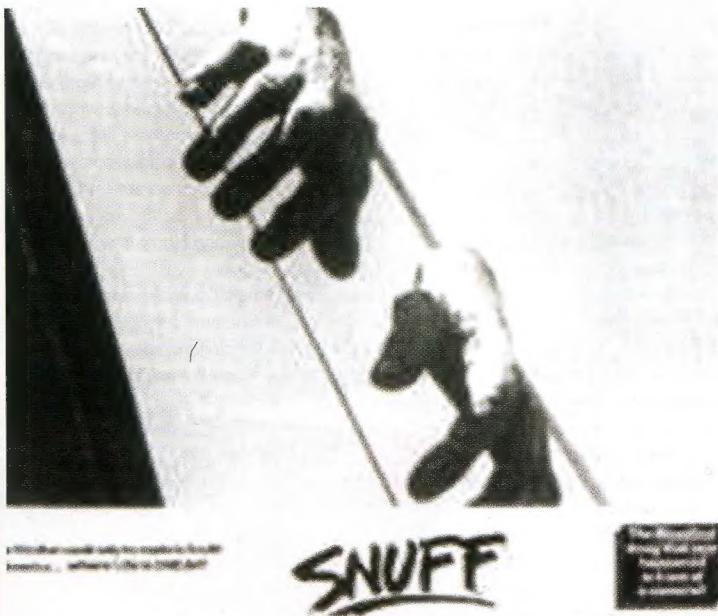
THE ORIGINAL LEGENDARY ATROCITY
SHOT AND BANNED IN NEW YORK



THE ACTORS AND ACTRESSES WHO DEDICATED
THEIR LIVES TO MAKING THIS FILM WERE
NEVER SEEN OR HEARD FROM AGAIN.

Life is cheap, and DUDs are getting even cheaper! Did people really die on camera to make Snuff? Not really, but appearing in such a pile of poo certainly killed off their acting careers...

REEL LIFE



Back in the bad old days of Video Nasties, one of the baddest of all was *Snuff*, a movie in which gruesome real-life murder and mutilation was supposedly committed on camera. In fact it was all a fake, a clever publicity gimmick, concocted by a canny distributor to add box office pulling power to an otherwise mediocre horror yarn, shot on the run in Argentina by husband and wife filmmaking team Michael and Roberta Findlay. And it worked. By the time women's groups turned up to picket its showing and a number of "senior law enforcement officials" had vouched for the authenticity of the end slaughter sequence, the film had become a very big moneymaker indeed.

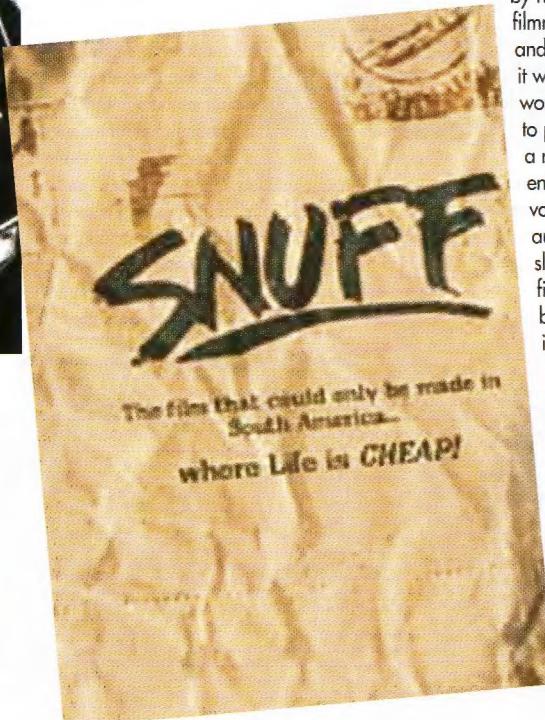
"Of course we never saw a penny of the profits," says Roberta, now a bubbly New Yorker in her mid-50s. "But then we didn't expect to. If you give a film of yours to an American distributor then you can kiss it goodbye." That's one of the reasons she formed her own

production and distribution company in the 1980s to market her own low-budget straight-to-video chillers with titles like *Primevil*, *Lurkers* and *The Oracle*.

A very private person who generally declines to be interviewed, Roberta was nevertheless pleased to discuss her chequered career with us to boost the Blue Underground DVD release of *Snuff* in its totally uncut form. We started by asking how she got into the movie business in the first place.

"I was a student in New York at City College," she explains, "a music major, actually, and I met a man who was running a silent film programme at the school. Now I had never seen a silent film in my life, nor did I care about them or anything else. But I got hooked on this guy, who eventually became my husband, and started playing the piano to accompany these silent film shows. I became intrigued with films after that, and after I graduated he decided to go off and make low-budget horror films and I just kind of followed him around. I was very young and was what you could call a film groupie. I didn't know anything, but was just intrigued by the lights and cameras and stuff."

In the late 60s, Roberta appeared before the camera for the first time, using the pseudonym of Anna Riva in a series of sadomasochistic shorts that were to earn the Findlays a reputation as the most notorious filmmakers in the annals of sexploitation pictures. An unknown



MURDER

'Snuff' movie gets a new life, 30 years on

BY SUZY AUSTIN

A 'VIDEO nasty' which would have TV clear-up campaigner Mary Whitehouse spinning in her grave has been unleashed on the British public.

Snuff, which supposedly shows a film crew member being killed, has been granted permission to be released on video nearly 30 years after it was made.

The British Board of Film Classification gave it an 18 certificate after deciding it would no longer offend the delicate sensibilities of the video-watching public.

Many said the 'killing' was a cunning publicity stunt thought up by the director and claimed the film was harmless.

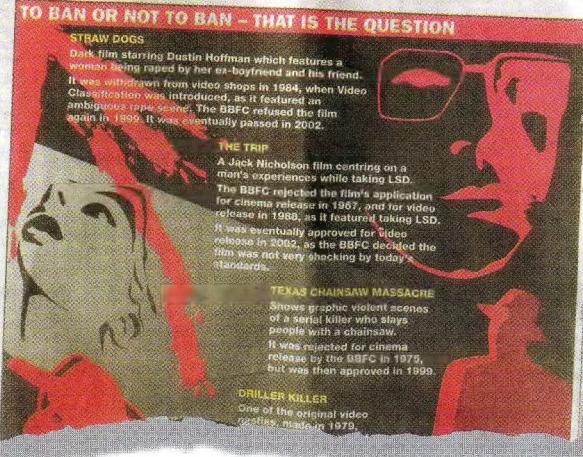
A National Film Theatre expert agreed *Snuff* was a spoof, adding it was marketed to make people believe the killing was real and the events really happened, which they didn't.

Snuff began life as a film called *Slaughter*, made in 1971 by Michael and Roberta Findlay, based on the *Halloween* by Charles Manson's followers.

It was then bought by impresario Allen Shackerton, who renamed it as *Snuff*.

He put upon the play of film extra scenes which were tacked on to the end, supposedly showing a member of the crew being tortured and killed.

Stories were then leaked that it was



Its controversial 'Death On Camera' subject matter and high profile Video Nasty status ensures that the impending UK DUD release of *Snuff* is big news – as witness this recent national newspaper report!

actress named Yoko Ono appeared in **Satan's Bed**, one of the earlier successes – this movie is available as a region free disc from Something Weird.

They also made the infamous **Flesh** series, never shown in this country, which dealt with the exploits of an evil misogynist and contained some of the most innovative death scenes ever concocted. In **Touch Of Her Flesh**, a woman is killed by a poisoned rose, and in **Kiss Of Her Flesh** a pair of earrings are wired to the mains!

Roberta is reluctant to discuss these films nowadays. "Like I said, I was very young," she shrugs. "To be honest, I don't have any memories that I would care to share with you." She moves the subject along to **Snuff**, which was the Findlays' first straight horror movie production.

"My husband and a friend raised some money predicated on their going to some foreign country to get the most for their American dollar. At the time, South America was the place that offered 2,000% on the American buck, so it was easy enough for Michael to talk these investors into sending us to Argentina, because it was an exotic place with an

interesting background, and he could speak Spanish. The Charles Manson gang was in the papers at the time, so he wrote a script about that and we shot it in Buenos Aires."

The film cost \$50,000 to make, and according to Findlay (who handled the camerawork) it turned out to be more of a holiday than anything else. "We had a great time making it, but when we got back to the States we discovered to our horror and dismay it made absolutely no sense at all!" When the Findlays finished editing it together as best they could, they slapped the title of **The Slaughter** on it, and it sat on the shelf for the next couple of years.

Then along came enterprising distributor Allen Shackerton. It was he who decided to retitle it **Snuff** and shoot his own epilogue depicting the murder of an actress with assorted sharp implements. All cast and credits were removed, thus adding to the mystique that this was the real McCoy. "I never saw the finished version," says Roberta. "I knew about this scene where they cut up this pregnant woman or a model, but the bulk of the film that we did shoot was

DVD World's Andy Brent interviews Roberta Findlay, one half of the notorious husband and wife filmmaking team, who gave the world the much-banned horror shocker **Snuff** - out on DVD now from Blue Underground!

so appallingly bad that I could never understand why anybody took it seriously at all. In fact the worst thing that happened to anybody on that production was that I got stung by a bee!"

The Findlays' second horror outing was **Shriek Of The Mutilated**, a 1974 no-budgeter that followed the exploits of some Yeti-hunting students. "It was financed by a crazy bunch of men who wanted to make a horror film about the Abominable Snowman," she chuckles. "The producer was a guy named Ed Adlum, who was very short and really loved running around as a Yeti because it made him look taller. His wife even made the suit for him, though to tell the truth he

looked more like the Easter Bunny in it. I don't know how the money was raised for that movie, but there were suspicious-looking guys turning up with little brown paper bags..."

Shortly after **Shriek Of The Mutilated** was released, the Findlays split up. She began a new career as a porno director, achieving notoriety when an American critic announced publicly that her **Angel Number Nine** was directed by a man, and that the name Roberta Findlay "was obviously a pseudonym." Michael wasn't so lucky. He was on his way to the Cannes Film Festival to demonstrate a new 3-D camera he had developed when a helicopter slammed into the roof of the Pan Am building, destroying the camera and decapitating Michael!

"That was a really tough time for me," sighs Roberta. "I'd really rather forget about my years in the wilderness. Let's just say I worked in New York as a freelance, sometimes as a director and sometimes as a cameraman – again on a variety of pictures that I would prefer not to talk about. Most of them were probably never released over there in England anyway."

Her wilderness years came to an end in 1986 when she set up her own

production company, Reeltyme, to shoot low budget horror flicks in and around New York City. "It was very dangerous," she says, "because we were using our own money. At the start we made mistakes, associated with the wrong people. But thankfully we recovered from that and went on to make a bunch of pictures that I'm quite proud of."

She's particularly enthusiastic about the creepy **Lurkers**, which is planned for a DVD special edition sometime next year. "That had good special effects by Ed French, who did **Mutant Hunt** and **Dead Time Stories**," she explains. "The monsters were great. One of them carried a duffel bag and looks like he just stepped out of World War II. And there's a female lurker who dresses in a beautiful Victorian gown, but her face looks like a big, horrible boil."

The film tells the story of a young woman who is plagued in her dreams by grotesque agents of the devil. "The lurkers are dead," explains Roberta, "but they don't look like corpses, more like distorted human beings. Their mission is to drag the woman back to the house where she was born in order to claim her soul."

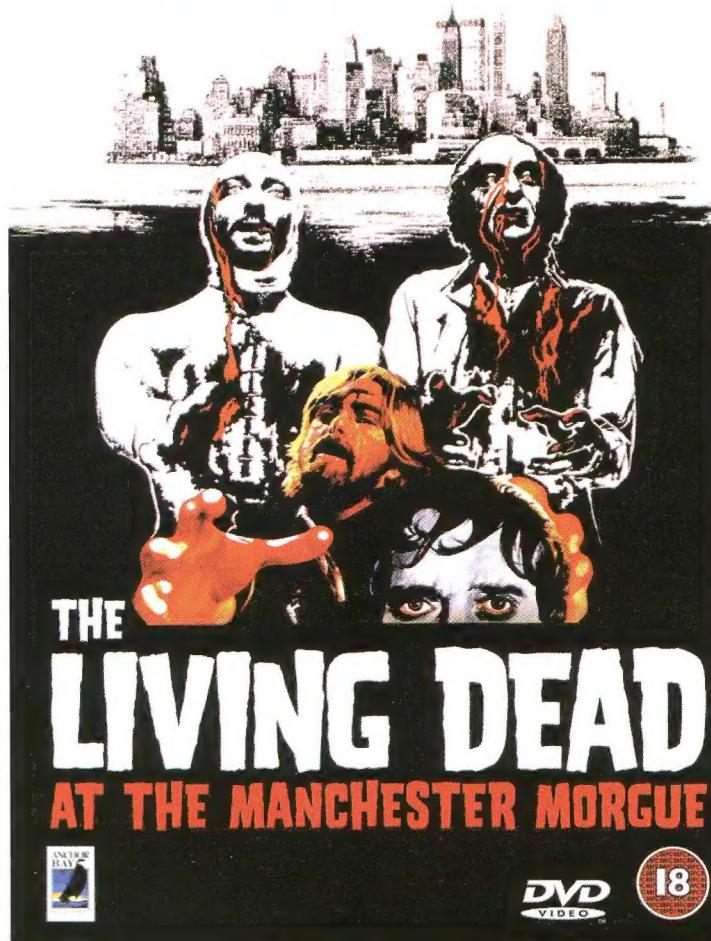
Though not one to favour the French-based auteur theory (that the director is always the author of a film), Roberta says that her own input is considerable, usually adding eroticism to the mix. "I turn everything into sex," she smiles. In **Lurkers**, the heroine is in love with a man who is an emissary of the devil, and she will do anything for him. It's her sexuality that gets her into trouble."

Though she still wheels and deals in her back catalogue, Roberta hasn't made a film for some time now. "The world has moved on and there's no real market for \$50,000 movies any more!" she grins. "People keep trying to convince me to move to L.A., where it's easier to get finance. But to tell you the truth I would personally have a lot of trouble there. I don't know how to drive, and you can't live in L.A. without driving. I guess that even though it's a terrible trial living in New York – it's filthy and full of garbage, and the crime is unbelievable – I really do love it. I'll be happy to stay on 42nd Street for the rest of my life. I have no axe to grind, no message. Well, I can't think of any, but I'll make one up if you give me a second."

The immigration laws seem to have let us down again, as a bunch of Italian zombies invade the unspoilt English countryside of the Lake District. But don't worry folks, it's only a movie called...

THE LIVING DEAD AT THE

LET SLEEPING CORPSES LIE



In 1968, after George Romero had unleashed his vision of flesh eating zombies wreaking havoc on helpless humans, the zombie film would begin to change. *Night of the Living Dead* was a departure from most of the zombie films before it, which mainly dealt with the living dead as tools that were usually controlled by black magic or voodoo. One of the zombie films that would follow in *Night of the Living Dead*'s footsteps was *The Living Dead at Manchester Morgue* (aka: *Let Sleeping Corpses Lie, Breakfast at the Manchester Morgue*).

The story goes this way... George (Ray Lovelock), the owner of an antique shop in London, has planned a holiday in order to meet with some friends in The Lake District to help them fix up their new home and get some relaxation. So George puts up a "closed for the holidays" sign outside his shop and takes off on his motorcycle, heading off into the countryside.

Along the way George decides to stop at a petrol station to get something to drink, when a young woman named Edna (Christina Galbo) accidentally backs up into George's bike, which is severely damaged and needs repairs. The owner of the garage tells him that it will be several days until the repairs will be completed and just like that George is stuck without a ride. Since it was Edna's fault she agrees to take George to Windermere.

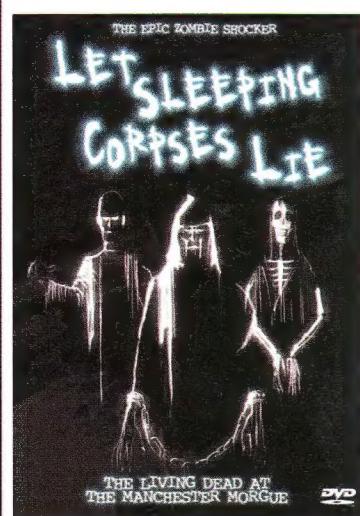
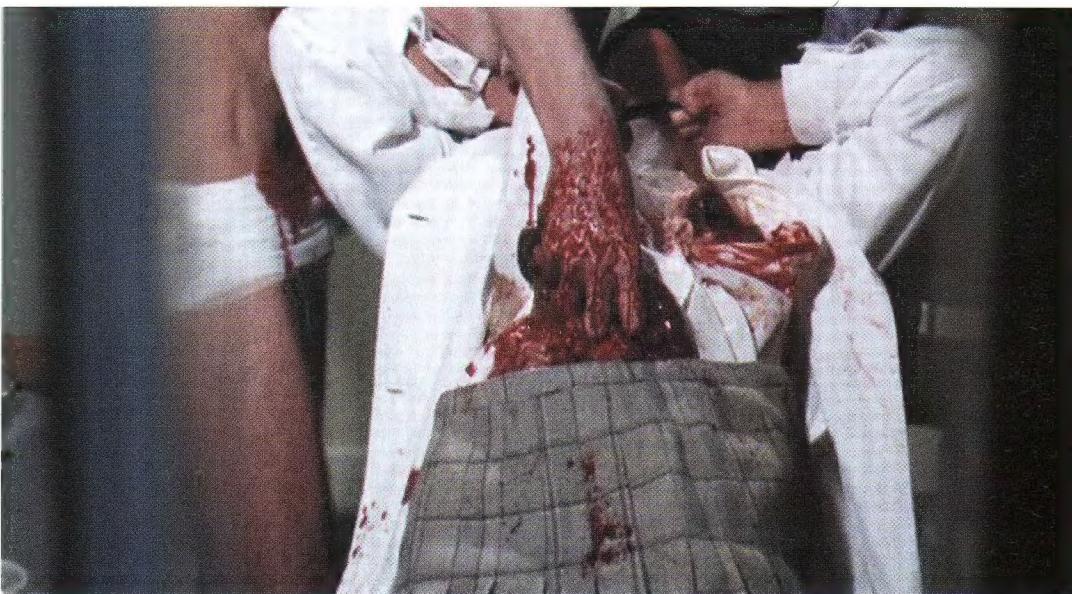
Once on the road Edna has second thoughts and begs George to drive her to

Southgate instead, because her sister urgently needs her there. George reluctantly agrees and together they head to Southgate.

On the way to Southgate, Edna loses her sense of direction and the two of them quickly become lost by a stream. George notices a sign pointing to the "Lewis Farm" and decides to go there and ask for directions while Edna waits in the car. When George arrives at the farm he discovers several men working out in the field. The farmers are using some experimental machine provided by the Agricultural Department to kill insects and parasites that are destroying crops. The experimental machine uses ultra violet radiation to emit a pulse that causes the nervous systems of primitive creatures to go crazy and violently attack each other.

The machine seems to be successful in eliminating pests but George believes it is dangerous to toy with nature. Meanwhile, back at the car Edna is waiting for George to return when suddenly a man with strange looking eyes comes out of the river and approaches her. She scrambles to the car but the zombie is not far behind. Edna manages to escape through the opposite door of the car and makes a dash for the farm.

She meets up with George and one of the farmers, who are already on their way back to the car, and tells them what she saw. However, when George looks over the scene the mysterious ghoul Edna describes is nowhere to be found. After Edna describes the man she saw the farmer says that reminds him of Guthrie,



MANCHESTER MORGUE!



a man who used to hang out around the stream until he recently drowned. Edna swears she wasn't imagining things and the man she saw was trying to kill her.

With the directions sorted out George and Edna continue their journey to Southgate and as night approaches they finally make it to Edna's sister's house. It seems that George and Edna arrive just in time because Edna's sister Katie is hysterical and claims that she was attacked by a crazed man and Martin, their father, was killed. The next morning the police arrive and begin to investigate the murder of Martin. The inspector (Arthur Kennedy) interrogates Katie and is convinced that she was the one who killed Martin. The fact she is a heroin addict doesn't help her defense.

The police warn George and Edna to book a room at the local hotel and remain in town for further questioning.

Meanwhile, George decides to take Edna to the cemetery to inspect the grave of Guthrie and prove once and for all that a "ghost" did not attack her.

When they arrive in the cemetery they discover the body of Guthrie missing and are subsequently attacked by walking corpses. It turns out that the machine being used to kill the parasites is bringing the dead back to life with the same effect it has on the insects.

Now George and Edna must manage to survive in a countryside that has become populated with the walking dead. They must also avoid authorities that blame them for the deaths that lie in the zombie's wake.

One of the best zombie films to be released after *Night of the Living Dead*, Jorge Grau's *Living Dead At The Manchester Morgue* is an Italian-Spanish production and displays

many of the traits that would become common ground in the Italian zombie films that would follow. The film has an interesting bunch of deadsters who don't seem to follow the standard zombie rules. The zombies here don't die from a gunshot wound to the head. Instead they have to be burned in order for them to be destroyed permanently. Personally we prefer the zombies that go down with a clean shot or blow to the head - but hey, whatever, right?

The cause for the resurrection of the dead is also pretty interesting but sadly it is one of our few complaints about this film. A lot of great zombie films don't try too hard to explain why the dead are coming back to life and we think *The Living Dead at Manchester Morgue* should've taken that route. When you start trying to explain what is causing the dead to rise from the grave the plot can get out of hand and become silly like it does here.

The Living Dead At The Manchester Morgue is also pretty infamous as one of the earliest gory zombie flicks. The gore in the movie is abundant, with some scenes that would make Fulci proud.

Highlights include a zombie ripping off a receptionist's breast and another chowing down on a police officer's eye to name but a few. No wonder it ended up on the **Nasties** list! Luckily you can now get a pristine special edition from Anchor Bay UK, and in fact copies of this are in the shops for as little as £5.99!

The disc presents the movie letterboxed

at 1.85:1 in a new 16x9 enhanced transfer. Anchor Bay has done a fine job cleaning up the print and only some mild speckling is evident throughout the transfer. Colours look generally good and the photography does a great job of bringing out the English countryside. This has some great camerawork in and around the Lake District area of Windermere.

The disc gives us an English Dolby Digital 5.1 track. Overall it's a nice mix with some good use of directional effects and the discrete channels, but nothing that will rock your world.

There are some nice supplements here. First the film has an introduction by director Jorge Grau, who talks a bit about finding the special moment in the film and hopes that you will find it frightening and entertaining. Next, in the disc's extras menu, you'll find a great interview with director Grau that is approximately 20 minutes long.

Rounding off the package is a short still gallery montage consisting of production photographs, lobby cards and poster art as well as a TV spot for *Don't Open the Window*, which is one of the many alternate titles *The Living Dead at Manchester Morgue* has gone by.

Even if it does have two main characters called George and Edna, this is one movie that all fans of Italian-made zombie flicks should have in their collection... and we have no problem nominating it a **DVD World Horror Classic!** •